Resilient Hope: An Exploration of the Evolution of Child Welfare Services in the Queen City

Undergraduate Research Thesis

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To my sister Emily, who introduced me to new passions and a world of wonder and excitement that became a second home

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Foreword

Recently I had an opportunity to sit down with my Aunt Elaine's mother Dottie Schlechtinger to hear about her experiences growing up in an institutional setting in the late 1930s-early 1940s. Dottie's mother passed away suddenly in 1937 when she was just eight years old. The death had a dramatic impact on Dottie's life as it created for her family a predicament well known to other single parent households. Her father could not continue his work while also raising four young children. As a result, the family was split up. As much as it pained him, Dottie's father had no choice but to entrust his children to St. Joseph's Orphanage in Cincinnati, Ohio for the same reason that many other financially distressed parents did, namely that he was unable to care for them.

And thus, Dottie began her days at the orphanage. Her place of residence for the next several years was St. Joseph's, which was founded in 1829 and was the oldest orphanage in the United States west of the Alleghenies.[1] Operated by the Sisters of Charity, the orphanage located at the intersection of Blue Rock and Cherry street in the Northside neighborhood in Cincinnati had the capacity to care for about 120 children. The orphanage ran a kindergarten and an elementary school, provided recreation, medical and dental care, and even offered special tutoring to children in their care.[2] Two caseworkers were on staff to work with the children, helping them keep in touch with parents and other relatives. Sometimes these efforts were successful, but frequently children saw contact with their biological families interrupted. Everyone on staff at St. Joseph's acknowledged that out-of-home placements, such as the services that St. Joseph's provided, should only be used as a measure of last resort and that the

[1] *Catholic Telegraph*, October 19, 1956 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[2] Ibid.

orphanage could not provide a child with everything he or she might receive in a home environment. Chaplain Francis Flanagan pointed out that even though the orphanage gave, "a great amount of loving care" it could not be, "a satisfactory substitute for a parent's love and affection."[3]

For children like Dottie, transitioning to life in an institutional setting was an emotionally grueling experience because of the trauma that preceded her out-of-home placement. Despite attempts by at least some of the nuns and staff at St. Joseph's to address Dottie's individual needs, she often felt constrained by the regimentation of daily life. In the orphanage she was required to wear a uniform, sleep in dormitory-style housing, and was permitted only a few possessions. Though a stated goal of St. Joseph's was for the children in their care to remain in touch with their families, Dottie rarely ever saw her siblings, even on birthdays, holidays, and other days of significance. She attended the orphanage's school, and in her classes, she never felt encouraged to apply herself. Dottie was expected to perform daily chores, and in all her time at St. Joseph's her responsibilities invariably resided in the kitchen. Starting as an eight-year-old, Dottie climbed inside large stainless-steel vats, scrubbing the remnants of stock soups and stews. She learned to appreciate the smell of the sauerkraut barrel located in the corner of the kitchen and the aroma of bread baking in the oven.

Yet, for all the hardships that Dottie experienced at the orphanage, a beacon of light for her was the time that she spent in the kitchen under the watchful eye of Sr. Agnes Zita who Dottie later referred to as, "the greatest friend I ever had." Sr. Agnes brought little moments of joy and humor to her vocation. Before meals where the orphanage would play host to important guests, Sr. Agnes would have the girls helping in the kitchen all pray facing a tiny statue of St.

[3] Ibid.

Therese before starting meal preparation. When one of these types of meals did not go well, Sr. Agnes would turn St. Therese around to face the wall for a time out. Sr. Agnes was kindness incarnate in an often harsh environment.

In Sr. Agnes, Dottie found a lifelong friend. She found an advocate that could make a lonely place feel a little bit warmer. Dottie always claimed that she felt alone in the world and a sense of companionship was an important component in keeping her grounded. There were many things that were out of her control. Growing up at St. Joseph's, Dottie never felt prepared for what she would encounter outside of the orphanage. When she left at the age of 14 after her father got remarried and was finally able to reunite his family, she had never met a black person, had never been exposed to faith traditions outside of the Catholic Church, and had no idea about the rigors of a high school education.

Listening to Dottie's story, it was hard not to focus on the strict discipline, the limited individual attention, the downplaying of individuality, and the lack of individual support she felt from the staff of St. Joseph's. It was particularly striking to me given my experience as a camp counselor working with children impacted by foster care. Our programs at Camp Joy in Clarksville, Ohio try to provide kids with consistency, encouragement, and support. After reflecting on my family history and work experiences relating to two very different manifestations of care afforded to dependent children, I naturally began to ask myself what happened to orphanages? And, how did the United States instead create a decentralized child welfare system reliant on foster placement in private boarding homes?

This project was created to study these questions and to explore the modern debate on foster care from 1920-1980 using Cincinnati as a case study. The pages that follow track the transition from orphanages to foster care as different means of caring for dependent, neglected,

or abused youth living outside of their biological families. This project analyzes how this shift took place in Cincinnati, the conditions that led to the abandonment of orphanages and how foster care developed as a replacement to older systems of care. My thesis is a story dedicated to the reformers who never relinquished their personal hope in a more caring future for children without permanent homes. Their fervent belief lives on through this project and through all whose actions seek to improve the conditions of child welfare trusting that childhood is sacred and that love is not something anyone should have to earn.

Introduction

Distinctions Between Foster Care and Older Methods of Care

When people think of child welfare programs today, they often think of foster care in private boarding homes. Foster care, much like the original intent of orphanage care, is designed to be a temporary service provided by states for children who cannot live with their families.[4] Children in foster care may live with relatives or with unrelated foster parents while their biological parents have the ability to take advantage of other welfare programs to better their economic position or to improve their capacity to offer a nurturing home environment to their children.[5] The goal of modern foster care is the preservation of the biological family and so it makes sense that the system prioritizes the reuniting of biological parents with their children when they improve their financial situation or recover their capacity to be high quality parents.[6] Foster care can also refer to placements in settings such as group homes, residential care facilities, emergency shelters, and supervised independent living.[7] The key identifiers of foster care are its impermanence, its existence outside of a dependent or neglected child's home environment, and its existence in the context of a family.[8] Modern foster care offers variability that seeks to address the individual needs of children. Fostering services are available to children ranging from true orphans and the poor, to delinquent and disabled children.[9] Placements of dependent

[4] Mckee, 98.
[5] Ethan G. Sribnick, "The Origins of Modern Child Welfare: Liberalism, Interest Groups, and the Transformation of Public Policy in the 1970s." *Journal of Policy History*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2011): 151. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0898030611000029.
[6] Ibid, 163.
[7] "Foster Care." Foster Care - Child Welfare Information Gateway - Child Welfare Information Gateway. Accessed February 20, 2020. https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/foster-care/.
[8] Rymph, Catherine E. *Raising Government Children a History of Foster Care and the American Welfare State* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 1.
[9] Ibid, 3.

children into home environments with the support of both foster parents and a specific caseworker underlines the professionalization of child welfare that has taken place since the 19th century. At the dawn of the 20th century, these resources were not always assumed.[10]

Another distinction between modern foster care and older manifestations of child welfare has been the increasing level of public support aimed at dependent and neglected youth. Foster care today is an overwhelmingly publicly funded phenomenon.[11] From all levels of government, federal, state, county, and city, public monies staff child social agencies, train foster parents, and help support the placement of deserving children.[12] However, child welfare was not always like this. In the beginning decades of the 20th century child welfare depended heavily on private charities to carry out welfare execution and distribution.[13]

The professionalization of casework and child welfare more broadly had profound impacts on how care was administered to dependent youth. Care became less about private philanthropy and more of a public practice, institutionalized care in orphanages gradually drifted towards a new ideal found in family foster care, and a field that had been motivated by charity transitioned to bureaucratic social work. In light of these dynamic changes, an important question arises: how did we arrive at a point of publicly felt obligation to care for dependent and neglected youth?

Twentieth Century Shift

The turn of the century witnessed a number of developments that fundamentally altered the landscape of child welfare. A rise in professional social work enabled greater and more vocal critiques of institutional care in settings such as orphanages.[14] These concerns came at a time

[10] Hacsi, 171.
[11] Kadushin, 53.
[12] Rymph, 12.
[13] Barillas, 112.
[14] Kadushin, 53.

where a population boom in the United States coincided with an influx of immigrants and widespread poverty.[15] Consequently, orphanages across the nation were often overcrowded, understaffed, and lacked resources to provide proper care.[16] While orphanages were better for children than the streets, they still could not provide what progressive social workers felt every child needed and deserved—a family environment in which they could grow and thrive.

In the early 1900s, progressive activists began a movement to shut down orphanages and send unaccompanied children to foster families instead of institutions. The consensus that emerged from this movement, that all children deserved individualized care and education in a family setting, formed the basis of the child welfare policies that we know today.[17] A new approach to child welfare came forward in the language set forth by the 1909 White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children. The conference, which was hosted by President Theodore Roosevelt, gathered leading experts and social workers in the field of child welfare and was instrumental in outlining a new ideal for child welfare provision.[18] Leaders at the assembly agreed that child welfare services should take place in private homes in family settings with the close coordination of professional social workers.[19]

Historians often cite the 1909 conference as a focal point in the progression of the humane movement, marking a greater desire by national leaders to meet the individual needs of dependent children.[20] After the first White House conference and prior to World War I, many

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[15] Guarneri, 28.
[16] Barillas, 113.
[17] Birgitte Søland, "'Never a Better Home': Growing Up in American Orphanages, 1920–1970." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2015): 36-37. https://doi.org/10.1353/hcy.2015.0000.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] John J. Stretch, "The Rights of Children Emerge: Historical Notes on the First White House Conference on Children." *Child Welfare*, vol. 49, no. 7 (1970): 365.

agencies around the country worked on securing private foster homes with individualized attention for the children in their care. They were responding to an open letter written by President Roosevelt calling attention to "the conclusions of the conference for such immediate use as [child welfare agencies] may care to make use of."[21] Foster care was thought to be an antidote to the shortcomings of institutional care due to its emphasis on maintaining children in a family environment.[22] Social workers often saw incorporating family foster care into administered child welfare as one of the most pressing needs in children's work.[23]

Child professionals in the 1920s typically stressed the importance of having a long-term plan, specific to each child receiving out-of-home care.[24] Many of these same professionals were critical of orphanages precisely because they thought that the volume of children cared for in institutions relative to the number of staff made individual affectionate care difficult to give.[25] Orphanages, these detractors said, were not organic, were unrepresentative of the wider world, and as such did not prepare children for life beyond the institution.[26] What remained to be answered was how leaders and localities might phase out not just the use, but also the need for institutional care following the initial 1909 White House Conference which failed to produce a specific plan to achieve its goals.

Social workers were also concerned about the ever-growing numbers of children brought up in city environments. Cities at the turn of the 20th century were louder and more chaotic than ever, and they often featured higher instances of crime and conflict. Social workers feared the

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[21] Ibid, 369.
[22] Fass, Paula S., and Mary Ann. Mason, *Childhood in America* (London: New York University Press, 2000) 337.
[23] Ibid, 399.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Rymph, 30.
[26] Kadushin, 54.

effects of poor influences and environmental factors on a child's development.[27] In spite of those fears, above all factors contributing to a child's wellbeing, no source was seen as having greater influence than the home environment.[28] Social workers across the nation increasingly believed that dependent children did best in a personal context within a family.[29] Children were viewed as highly impressionable, with one Cincinnati paper quoted as saying, "Magnificent and tragic is the faith of young children even in parents most worthless."[30] In other words, children were susceptible to the example of the adults in their lives and the existence of immoral parents could produce immoral children, eroding the foundation of a functioning society.

In addition to its potential to reform delinquent children, foster care in private boarding homes was seen as way of providing essential care to children with handicaps or special needs.[31] Children who were developmentally delayed could spend their entire lives in institutions without ever receiving the individual care that they needed.[32] For children who were blind, crippled, or who had special needs which required additional measures of care, institutions often were not capable ministering specifically to them. Private foster homes became a sought-after

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[27] Rochelle Beck, "The White House Conferences on Children: An Historical Perspective." *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 43, no. 4 (1973): 653. doi:10.17763/haer.43.4.h80r773u3413t914.
[28] Social Worker Notes, Family Service of the Cincinnati Area Records, 1880-1971, n.d., Mss 594, Box 13, Volumes 13-14, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[29] Hacsi, 173.
[30] *Post*, December 6, 1928 here quoted from Family Service of the Cincinnati Area Records, 1880-1971, n.d., Mss 594, Box 13, Volumes 13-14, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[31] Harold A. Jambor, "Theodore Dreiser, the "Delineator" Magazine, and Dependent Children: A Background Note on the Calling of the 1909 White House Conference." *Social Service Review*, vol. 32, no. 1 (1958): 33-40.
[32] *Enquirer*, December 13, 1928 here quoted from Family Service of the Cincinnati Area Records, 1880-1971, n.d., Mss 594, Box 13, Volumes 13-14, Cincinnati Museum Center.

improvement. Home settings were, to social workers, the ideal setting for children with handicaps or special needs to grow to reach their fullest potential in a nurturing environment.[33]

At a second White House conference held in 1919, titled the White House Conference on Standards of Child Welfare, national leaders in child welfare wrote extensively on the subject of standards that should be adhered to when raising children in public care.[34] After seeking reforms in child welfare in the first decade of the 20th century, many initiatives had to be put on hold following the outbreak of World War I.[35] When the tides of war receded, child professionals around the country turned their attention to finally implementing the reforms that they had long sought. The first decades of the 20th century featured a proliferation of public child welfare services and a premium placed on the credentials of trained social workers.

Child Welfare in Cincinnati

There are many reasons why Cincinnati is an obvious candidate for an historical case study on the evolution of child welfare. The city's location in the nation's heartland places it at the center of the debate on how best to serve the needs of dependent children. Westward migration in the early decades of the 20th century fueled a rapid rise in Cincinnati's immigrant population. The city's diverse demographics, booming cultural and economic influence, all made Cincinnati characteristic of metropolitan America. In addition to representing a microcosm of the debate held nationally on Progressive Era policies, the relative resilience of Cincinnati's private child

[33] "Change They Need," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 23, 1928.
[34] Children's Bureau of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare "The Story of the White House Conferences on Children and Youth" (Washington DC: DHEW, 1967), 6.
[35] Cynthia A. Connolly and Janet Golden "'Save 100,000 Babies': The 1918 Children's Year and Its Legacy." *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 108, no. 7 (2018): 903. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2018.304354.

social agencies makes the city an interesting case, both indicative of general national changes and characterized by unique features.

To many Cincinnatians at the turn of the 20th century, a chief concern was the changing demographic profile of the city. Cincinnati was located at a juncture of diverse immigration patterns in the late 19th century. Newcomers ranged from African Americans from the South to Appalachians from the eastern hill country and Germans from overseas.[36] The demographic changes Cincinnati endured would become important because they altered the public's perception of their community identity both ethnically and religiously. What had been a largely white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant city was being transformed to a melting pot of racial diversity and blends of Protestantism and ascendant Catholicism.

The changes in demographic makeup in Cincinnati also shifted the face of poverty in the city. Some migrants who landed in Cincinnati fared better than others. Germans immigrants, for example, were better able to integrate themselves into Cincinnati's white working and middle class than African Americans. In Cincinnati, African Americans were largely excluded from respected and high earning occupations in addition to their segregation elsewhere in both housing and education.[37] Due to the marginalization that many African American faced upon moving to Cincinnati, many of them were forced into domestic work in private homes and day work in Cincinnati's shipyards and loading industries. These occupations were highly dependent on factors such as discretionary spending available in affluent homes and the time of year. The job sectors that employed Cincinnati's African Americans often did not pay wages sufficient to support raising families, which in turn led to many individuals within Cincinnati's African

[36] Miller, Zane L. *Boss Cox's Cincinnati Urban Politics in The Progressive Era* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1968), 29-31.
[37] Ibid, 32.

American community to be disproportionately affected by circumstances of poverty. The increasing association between African Americans and circumstances of poverty would have lasting impacts on race relations in the future.

For many Cincinnatians, child welfare was not something that was best left to public administration, but was something that should be distributed by action of private charity. Their thoughts in the early 20th century are supported by modern research. Historian Matthew Crenson argues that four distinct models of caring for needy children developed out of the early foster care movement: the Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota, and Ohio models.[38] At the two ends of the spectrum were the Massachusetts and New York examples where the former led the nation in using public monies to place dependent children directly in family foster homes and the latter used public monies for boarding in private orphanages. The Minnesota and Ohio models were between the extremes, using public monies to place dependent children in public orphanages, county by county, but only temporarily until placement could be secured with a private family.[39] The differences expressed in each state's approach to child welfare are rooted in the distinct culture and character of their populations. For example, states with high concentrations of Catholics were more likely to subsidize dependent children's placement in private orphanages.[40] The motivating force behind this trend was the fear held by Catholic leaders that foster care would encourage Protestant families to care for Catholic children and lead to their indoctrination into what Catholics viewed as heretical traditions.

The middle-of-the-road approach to child welfare found in Ohio was distinct from the brand found in Minnesota. Although Ohio laws in the 19th century granted county commissioners the

[38] Crenson, 45-46.
[39] Ibid, 46.
[40] Ibid, 45.

authority to form public orphanages, unlike the Minnesota case, county commissioners were never required to establish them.[41] Ohio's model of child welfare enabled densely populated cities such as Cleveland and Cincinnati to outsource the administration of public welfare services to private organizations. These cities had by the late 19th century grown to depend on previously established networks of private charities. Because of the strong relationship between Cincinnati's private charities and the community, no publicly funded orphanage was ever established in Hamilton County.[42] The reliance on private networks to administer public welfare in Cincinnati can be traced to the devastating floods of 1913, and its legacy on the city.[43] Rural Ohio counties, on the other hand, were more likely to establish public orphanages.[44] The consequence of Cincinnati existing within the Ohio model of child welfare meant that the city would enter the 20th century without a tradition of the government directly intervening in the welfare of needy children. With regard to the budding foster care movement, dependent children in Cincinnati were entirely at the mercy of private agencies' willingness and ability to board dependent children in foster homes because of their limited resources as charities. This phenomenon is unique to Cincinnati relative to the rest of Ohio.

A final reason why Cincinnati might be considered as a prime candidate for a case study is the degree to which it was a leader in promoting the professionalization of social work in the early 20th century. One of the national agencies that had the greatest influence in devising professional standards for children relating to foster care was the Child Welfare League.[45] Child

[41] Ibid, 57.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Robert M. Brown "The Ohio River Floods of 1913." *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, vol. 45, no. 7 (2013): 500. doi:10.2307/200059.
[44] Crenson, 46.
[45] "The Child Welfare League Takes a Stand." *Social Service Review*, vol. 31, no. 1 (1957): 87.

agencies that joined the league pledged to uphold minimum standards in their work of assembling, codifying, and disseminating the specialized knowledge of child placement.[46] Among the first public agencies to join the league was the state agency of Ohio, along with local public and private agencies in Cincinnati.[47]

Even at the grassroots level, child welfare employees were using education to transform the operations of child welfare. Within a decade of the White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, social work professionals were hosting local meetings supporting the latest advances in the field of child welfare. In higher education, university social work students were learning modern techniques that stressed the importance of individual attention to develop personality in children.[48] The new techniques reflected an optimism among social workers both in new modes of urban life and in new methods of raising children. Many social workers coming to Cincinnati were being taught that in order to be effective, they should be aware of the origin and character of communities in order to successfully combat political, industrial, and social barriers to proper child development.[49] The optimism and potential felt by social workers to make meaningful impacts in the Cincinnati was real, as one college student remarked in her notes, "social work has only just begun."[50]

[46] Rymph, 33.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Social Worker Notes, Family Service of the Cincinnati Area Records, 1880-1971, n.d., Mss 594, Box 13, Volumes 13-14, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

I. Suffer the Children, Don't Let Them Suffer: Developments in 1920s Foster Care

Within the context of extraordinary change affecting child welfare nationally, local child welfare agencies and institutions in Cincinnati began the task of reforming themselves. A vivid example of newly professionalized social work affecting child welfare administration came to Catholic Charities in 1926 shortly after the inauguration of Archbishop Timothy McNicholas. Beyond the new initiatives that this chapter will explore relating to Catholic Charities, Cincinnati in many ways throughout the 1920s reflected broader trends from across the nation in the field of child welfare. In other words, the developments to come out of the city throughout the decade did not exist in a vacuum and were, in fact, inspired by national sentiments. Ohio and Cincinnati were both leaders in pioneering and implementing meaningful reforms to child welfare practices. By the time Archbishop McNicholas assumed his office, changes in the ways that dependent children were cared for were well under way.

On a blustery, dark evening on November 12, 1926, hundreds of child welfare workers representing the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's charitable work crowded into the Western and Southern auditorium at 400 Broadway St. in Cincinnati, Ohio. An air of apprehension permeated the expansive room. Until this evening's presentation, the future direction of the Bureau of Catholic Charities had been held in suspense since July 1925, when John Timothy McNicholas O.P. was appointed Archbishop of Cincinnati. There had been a great deal of speculation as to what kind of archbishop McNicholas might become ever since he received his elevation to the ecclesial see of Cincinnati from the episcopacy of Duluth, Minnesota. More than two hundred priests greeted McNicholas when he arrived in Eaton, Ohio and, following a special train ride to

Cincinnati, more than ten thousand people lined the streets to welcome him to the Queen City.[51] For the Irish-immigrant-turned-bishop, it was a sort of coming home for a man who began his religious studies at a Dominican priory near Somerset, Ohio.[52] Based on his record in Duluth and elsewhere, McNicholas had proven himself to be an outspoken, forceful, and at times controversial church leader.[53] The child welfare workers in the auditorium waited to see how rumored controversy might affect them. They did not have to wait long.

Following the investiture ceremonies on August 12, the new archbishop wasted no time in initiating efforts to reform Catholic welfare initiatives directed at dependent, neglected, or abused children. Within his first month in office, McNicholas invited Reverend Doctor John O'Grady of the National Conference of Catholic Charities to make an extensive analysis and study of all the charity and social work done in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The purpose of the study was to identify ways in which the Bureau of Catholic Charities could be reorganized and a new system of coordinated child welfare inaugurated.[54] For more than a year, Catholic child welfare workers at the Archdiocese's charities went about their days in unknowing uncertainty. That November evening, they hoped that they might gain a semblance of insight into how their work might change under the reforms of an ambitious new bishop.

As the lights in the auditorium were dimmed, the chatter of the child welfare workers hushed. All eyes transitioned in unspeaking unison toward the staged podium beneath a warm yellow spotlight. Fr. O'Grady stepped out into the stage with a quiet dignity; his steps matched

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[51] Fortin, Roger *Faith and Action: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1996* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2002), 258.
[52] Ibid, 259.
[53] Ibid.
[54] An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Catholic Foster Care Program in Cincinnati, unpublished manuscript by Virginia E. Madigan, undated, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

the cadence of an audience who applauded his entry, though it is likely none among them could quite answer for what reason they clapped. As Fr. O'Grady assumed the podium, he laid out his report, and in clearing his throat, began to speak, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Following that earnest reminder of Christ's invitation to the children, the audience of child welfare workers was stunned by the acerbity with which Fr. O'Grady proceeded to lambast the inefficiencies of the Bureau of Catholic Charities. He pulled no punches in his meticulous analysis of the state of charitable work in Cincinnati. Fr. O'Grady recognized that in Cincinnati, as in other dioceses, the various charitable institutions and organizations that had developed in the city had done so without any relationship one to the other.[55] Each institution was designed by its founders to fill some specific and immediate need. Among the needs that particularly appealed to the pioneers of Catholic charity in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, was the care of dependent, neglected and delinquent children, away from their own homes. Over the years they had established a network of institutions giving care to children, representing a capital investment in excess of two million dollars, and an annual expenditure of $436,851.[56] Fr. O'Grady claimed that it was no longer possible for these institutions to carry out the work they set out to accomplish without collaboration. To this end, he recommended the devolution of the Bureau of Catholic Charities and the creation a new consolidated agency, Catholic Charities, which would be comprised of four main divisions: The Family Division, the Children's Division, the Division of Protective Care, and the Division of Recreational and Community Work.

[55] *Times Star*, November 13, 1926 as seen in RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[56] *Times Star*, November 13, 1926 as seen in RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Following the announcement of these divisions, Fr. O'Grady turned to the provisions of his report that called for the procurement of an adequate staff. The employees seated in the auditorium listened as the priest explained a new policy that would accept only trained social workers as staff of Catholic Charities.[57] Those without proper credentials would be relieved of their duties. For individuals without proper credentials who remained interested in keeping their jobs, a training course would be offered at St. Xavier College.[58] Current employees of Catholic Charities without training in social work would be given three months to begin their studies.[59] Fellowships were established at the University of Cincinnati and the National Catholic School of Social Service in Washington D.C.[60] These fellowships were available to Catholic laypersons, who, having completed a college course, wished to enter Catholic social work.

Developments in the Buckeye State

In the 1920s, when Archbishop McNicholas inaugurated his reform program within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the desire to improve services directed at dependent children was not a feeling unknown to policymakers in Ohio. Many state politicians, after reflecting on the key provisions of the 1909 White House Conference, decided that it was time to revamp Ohio's laws relating to the care of dependent children. These laws had remained largely unchanged since 1866 when the Ohio General Assembly authorized boards of county commissioners across the state to construct orphan asylums or other facilities as funds would permit.[61] The legislature gave

[57] An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Catholic Foster Care Program in Cincinnati, unpublished manuscript by Virginia E. Madigan, undated, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ohio Board of State Charities Department Scrapbook, 1914- 1921 as seen in State Archives Series 1004, Volume 4, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio

the commissioners the power to levy a tax for the construction of local children's homes. The 1866 legislation also established a board of trustees for such homes. Children's homes accepted children who were orphaned, abandoned, neglected, inadequately provided for by their parents, or placed in the home by the juvenile court.

The goal of Ohio reformers in the decade following the White House Conference was to participate in the nationwide foster care movement by formalizing licensing, payments for boarding homes, and supervision provided by the state and local social service agencies to dependent children.[62] Following the Ohio Mothers' Pension Act in 1913, the *Commission to Codify and Revise Laws Relative to Children*, a joint committee of the Ohio legislature, continued its work by recommending a bill which was ultimately passed and signed into law in the summer of 1918. The new legislation provided for the licensing by the state of homes accepting children for "hire, gain or reward."[63] This was the first time that Ohio codified into law efforts aimed at promoting foster care. The state Board of Charities was granted the sole authority to license and supervise private boarding homes.[64] The law was well received by local agencies in Cincinnati, the majority of whom wished to implement modern methods of caring for dependent children.[65] This legislation and others from the time period often did not affect the principle institutions administering care to dependent children. Instead, many institutions simply chose to reorient or expand their services to include new forms of foster care. For both public and private child agencies across the state, the 1918 law marked a new beginning and many

[62] Reports and Minutes, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[63] *Minimum Standard for Child Welfare Adopted by the Washington and Regional Conferences on Child Welfare*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1920): 301.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

eagerly applied to register boarding homes that they viewed as a solution to overcrowded institutions.[66] The dramatic increase in boarding home applications made clear to state policymakers that a bureaucratic infrastructure to oversee a massive statewide network of foster care was necessary.

The 1918 legislation was initially viewed by social workers as a step towards progress, but one that created problems of its own. Essentially, the state government began offering a service that it was ill-equipped to undertake. The Ohio Board of Charities did not have the administrative bureaucracy nor did it have the staff to effectively license the volume of boarding home applications it was receiving. The 1918 legislation called for boarding homes to be licensed by the state and regulated by the state government located in Columbus. Many cities across the state found themselves in a situation where there was no organization prepared to act as the state's agent in their area.[67]

The solution to this apparent problem was found in the Boarding Home Law of 1920. The law was passed to give local agencies in Ohio the authority to establish and supervise boarding homes.[68] The challenge of administering child welfare was transferred to counties, cities, and their private charities in this sweeping reform.[69] The hope of lawmakers was that the closer proximity of local agencies to boarding homes and foster parents would produce greater

[66] An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Catholic Foster Care Program in Cincinnati, unpublished manuscript by Virginia E. Madigan, undated, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[67] Annual Report of Director the Juvenile Protective Association of Cincinnati 1919, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[68] Marian J. Morton, "Institutionalizing Inequalities: Black Children and Child Welfare in Cleveland, 1859-1998." *Journal of Social History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2000): 148. doi:10.1353/jsh.2000.0119.
[69] Ibid, 149.

accountability.[70] In addition to promoting accountability, the 1920 legislation also allowed for the continuation of varying systems and approaches to child welfare administration across Ohio. Though the 1920 legislation reflects Ohio's participation in the national foster care movement, the state's cession of oversight authority over to local agencies set the stage for a unique form of foster care to develop in the Queen City relative to Ohio and the nation.

Why Reform Mattered

Prior to the 1920s, one of the most common complaints about child welfare in Cincinnati was the lack of inter-agency cooperation and agency inefficiency.[71] Many people across the city believed that welfare was wasteful in that it was not always directed at those who truly needed it.[72] A common perception among Cincinnatians was that the parents who took advantage of the charity and generosity of private institutions did so as a way of shifting upon Catholic nuns and social workers the responsibility of rearing and supporting their children.[73] These criticisms were frequently discussed in newspaper articles by social workers and city leaders, with one article stating, "It is unfortunate that all the citizens of Cincinnati cannot see the flagrant waste of these agencies on people with the means to care for themselves."[74]

One example of concern over institutional waste was manifested in the controversies surrounding Our Lady of the Woods, a girls' home located in Cincinnati. The home was repeatedly criticized for its policy of accepting girls into its care with no policies in place for admission. So long as there was a bed available, girls were accepted regardless of color, creed,

[70] Ibid.
[71] Reports and Minutes, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] "Budget is Reviewed," *Enquirer*, April 11, 1928.

background, or address.[75] Criticism against the girls' home built to a crescendo because no meaningful investigations were being carried out by the institution's staff of the conditions that led to a child needing an out-of-home placement. Many in Cincinnati felt that in that vacuum there was the potential for abuse and consequently, services might not be going to those children and families most in need. It is impossible to know if the reports from newspapers were overblown. But what is true is that the lack of meaningful investigation into family applications by the staff of Our Lady of the Woods served as a justification for professional casework. Like other institutions of similar size and mission in Cincinnati, Our Lady of the Woods had no way of ensuring that their charity work was going to those who needed it most.

In addition to inefficiencies, institutions prior to reforms often lacked credentialed social workers on their staffs who could implement meaningful change. Professional casework was increasingly seen as important to child welfare because it provided an additional level of accountability for agencies. The need for professional casework is expressed in the example of Mount St. Mary's in the early 1920s where social work was being carried out by a lay member of staff, who was a graduate nurse, but without social work training. She handled all investigations for admission that were referred to the institution by the city.[76] There was no communication between Mount St. Mary's and the Bureau of Catholic Charities, and few records were kept. Mount St. Mary's provided boarding homes under the supervision of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd for girls who had aged out of orphanages, and for whom their parents were not seen as willing or fit enough to provide a proper home. However, no records were kept about these non-

[75] An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Catholic Foster Care Program in Cincinnati, unpublished manuscript by Virginia E. Madigan, undated, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[76] Ibid.

licensed boarding homes. Consolidation and cooperation would be pursued with Catholic Charities and Hamilton County in the late 1920s and was hoped to remedy this lack of accountability.

Finally, institutions were criticized for rarely being able to meet the emotional needs of children in their care. In a 1920s interview, an employee of the Children's Home, Miss Athens, summarized this idea, "The big problem is not providing toys or food. Soothing a frightened child and making him feel at home is more difficult and more important. I find that the other children are the best comforters for a homesick child, once they persuade the newcomer to play with them, tears are forgotten."[77] In 1929, 804 children were cared for by the Children's Home by 14 workers. This figure includes one caseworker and one worker from the Child Welfare League of America.[78] The ratio of adults to children speaks for itself; clearly, institutions lacked the resources to personally address the needs of every child. It was in pursuing the best interests of children that local leaders pushed to place dependent children in private boarding homes where they might receive that which they were denied in overcrowded orphanages.

A Spirit of Progress

While attendees of Archbishop McNicholas' 1926 meeting might have been shocked, viewed in context of national, state, and local developments in child welfare, the O'Grady Report was in fact indicative of a movement towards reform that swept through Cincinnati as much as many other parts of the United States in the 1920s.[79] For every child agency in Cincinnati, progressive zeal manifested itself in the form of increased consolidation and the creation of

[77] *Post*, March 27, 1929 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Rymph, 37.

mechanisms to ensure accountability among workers and parents.[80] Cincinnati's child welfare institutions and orphanages did not disappear but rather began to reorient themselves as rebranded child social agencies and expanded their services into private foster care while also retaining traditional institutional care for dependent youth.[81] In many cases, these two forms of child provisions were offered side by side within a single child social agency.

Transformed by the passage of the 1920 Boarding Home Law, foster care in private boarding homes in Cincinnati went from a service rarely provided to the ideal placement sought after by social workers and city welfare leaders.[82] The 1920s witnessed an explosion in foster placements within the span of a few years. In one month in 1920, Catholic Charities accepted 47 children into their care and only three of them were placed in private boarding homes.[83] In the following years as agencies developed and enacted their systems of pre-placement investigation, dependent children were increasingly likely to receive placement in home environments.[84] By the end of the decade, for example, the Children's Home cared for 575 out of its 867 children in boarding homes.[85] The administrative demands created by the transition towards private foster care in boarding homes begged for consolidated management and cooperation between agencies.

[80] Marian J. Morton, "The Transformation of Catholic Orphanages: Cleveland, 1851-1996." *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 88, no. 1 (2002): 73. doi:10.1353/cat.2002.0038.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Catholic Foster Care Program in Cincinnati, unpublished manuscript by Virginia E. Madigan, undated, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[84] Ibid.
[85] *Times Star*, May 7, 1929 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

Concerns over consolidation and cooperation were initially addressed with the creation of a centralized Boarding Home Bureau under the Community Chest in 1923.[86] The Community Chest was an affiliation of private charities and welfare groups in Cincinnati who came together following the widespread damage of the flood of 1913. In the wake of the tragedy, community leaders recognized the lack of public resources to meet the demands for welfare assistance, so they established a means in the Community Chest of coordinating private charity. Two years after the establishment of the Boarding Home Bureau, it was deemed advisable for children to be supervised by organizations of their own faith, meaning that Catholic Charities would care for Catholic children, United Jewish Charities, the Jewish and the Children's Home, the Protestant.[87]

Cooperation between agencies often resulted in more thorough review of boarding applications, as individual institutions often did not have the resources to question the reasons for placing a child given by a parent. The ability of private charitable agencies to exercise greater scrutiny over boarding applications meant that agencies were often better able to direct welfare towards children and families most in need. This often resulted in increased, though still unequal, attention to historically marginalized segments of the city's population.

African American Access to Child Welfare Services

African Americans were subject to discriminatory laws and social practices, and often did not share equal access to welfare services in Cincinnati.[88] With regard to child welfare, continuing traditions of kinship care influenced the manner in which African Americans

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[86] Shultz, William J., *The Humane Movement in the United States: 1910-1922* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1924), 186.
[87] Reports and Minutes from 1943, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[88] Zane L. Miller and Bruce Tucker "The Revolt against Cultural Determinism and the Meaning of Community Action: A View from Cincinnati." *Prospects*, vol. 15 (October, 1990): 422. doi:10.1017/S0361233300005950.

interacted with an evolving system of child welfare in Cincinnati.[89] Though many African Americans were excluded from adoptive and boarding care services in Cincinnati, many also began to benefit from the child welfare reforms of the 1920s.[90] In this decade, some child welfare reformers among Cincinnati's public and private welfare agencies began to recognize the unsustainability of the historical injustice being directed at the African American community in Cincinnati.[91] These reformers began to devise measures aimed at improving the lives of African Americans. While it would be erroneous to claim that reformers' efforts immediately resolved issues of discrimination in Cincinnati, the 1920s are important because they mark a period where at least some individuals in the city began to insist on equal access to child welfare services.

African American children and families benefited from the increased attention they received from the likes of city welfare leaders and the Community Chest in the 1920s. In 1922, The Negro Welfare Association was made a department of the Council of Social Agencies. "The department held conferences with social workers, ministers, physicians, teachers, women's clubs, and fraternal organizations to promote cooperation between the different agencies interested in Black welfare and to improve standards of efficiency."[92] Additionally, the Community Chest sanctioned the establishment of the Bureau for Negro Children. This new social service agency operated within the ministries of the Children's Home of Cincinnati.[93] As the bureau was established, the superintendent of the Children's Home, Dr. JB Ascham, made

[89] Ibid.
[90] Zane L. Miller, "Corruption Ain't What It Used to Be: City Politics, Ethics, and the Public Welfare." *Queen City Heritage,* vol. 49, no. 2 (1991): 27–29.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Koehler, Lyle *Cincinnati's Black Peoples: A Chronology and Bibliography* (Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati Press, 1986), 122.
[93] Winifred Culbertson, "The Children's Convalescent Home: Cincinnati Sets New Standards of Care and of Coöperative Effort." *The American Journal of Nursing,* vol. 31, no. 9 (1931): 1023. Accessed March 18, 2020. doi:10.2307/3410317.

the announcement, "that the work which the home had been doing for some years for Negro children would be enlarged to embrace all that was contemplated by the proposed bureau."[94] The Children's Home from this point on accepted the responsibility to carry out investigations respecting all placements for institutional or foster home care of black children. The investigations carried out by the Children's Home were similar to those conducted by Catholic Charities and were largely in line with national trends. Social workers carried out step-by-step procedures to collect background information in order to diagnosis the underlying reason for placing a child in boarding care.[95]

Through the establishment of the Bureau for Negro Children, the Children's Home became the lynchpin of several Cincinnati agencies that coordinated the care of African American children. The Children's Home worked alongside Cincinnati's all-black orphanages, which at this time included the Orphan Asylum for Negro Children, the Shelter Home for Negro Children and the Home for Negro Girls. The expansion of public and private welfare services to historically marginalized segments of Cincinnati's population highlight the dramatic changes that took place during this period.

Implications for the Future

By the end of the 1920s, foster care in private boarding homes was the preferred means of caring for dependent, neglected, or abused children. Cincinnati's social agencies displayed great leadership in implementing private foster care for the city's dependent youth. In an example of local innovation, CC Carstens, who was the Executive Director of the Child Welfare League of

[94] Times Star, October 10, 1929 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[95] Kunzel, Regina G. *Fallen Women, Problem Girls Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work 1890-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 7.

America (CWLA), visited the Children's Home of Cincinnati in 1928 to study the success that the Children's Home had enjoyed in the placement and regulation of private foster homes.[96] The Children's Home was the only Protestant child social agency in Hamilton County authorized to regulate the placement of children in boarding homes. The CWLA was interested in mirroring, specifically, the way the Children's Home recruited foster parents as they believed that there was not enough information had by the public of boarding homes for children deprived by some means of the care of their natural parents.

In addition to recruiting foster parents, Cincinnati's child agencies were also highly successful in finding adoptive homes for children who qualified. In a study made by the Child Welfare League of the problems of illegitimacy in Hamilton County, it was noted that the Catholic Charities' program for adoption work was the best organized in Hamilton county out of the dozen child social agencies studied.[97] The report highlighted the activities of child agencies around the city that paved the way for effective recruitment campaigns of individuals willing to open their doors and hearts to dependent children.

Considering all of the dramatic changes that took place following the passage of the 1920 Boarding Law in Ohio in the care for dependent children, it is fitting that Dr. JB Ascham of the Children's Home gave a talk in 1929 in Columbus at a session of the State Advisory Committee to the Public Welfare Department entitled, "The New Trend in Child Welfare." H L Griswold, the State Director of Public Welfare, called this meeting for the purpose of discussing the independent homes to which children were sent.[98] The conversation here and elsewhere would be

[96] "Director Visits Children's Home," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 6, 1928.
[97] Child Welfare League Study of Illegitimacy in Hamilton County, 1929, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[98] *Times Star*, September 25, 1929 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

crucial to answering how agencies, both public and private, would cope with ever growing calls for more stringent regulation, and fights over jurisdiction of foster homes into the future. The unique system of progressive private welfare that had developed in Cincinnati was about to undergo the greatest challenge it had yet faced in its young consolidated life: the onslaught of the Great Depression.

II. A Shoestring Depression, Foster Care in the 1930s

During a 1933 meeting of the Woman's City Club of Cincinnati, Miss Glanzberg considered the situation she and the other women in the room were facing and reached the conclusion, "We as a community need to step up and take care of our own; we can no longer rely on the goodwill of others because times are hard."[99] During the Great Depression, Miss Glanzberg, like other leaders in Cincinnati, felt a greater sense of obligation to care for the needs of dependent children in her community. In the decades following the first White House Conference in 1909 where professional social workers denounced institutional care for children, leaders across the country had begun to chart a course independent of one another towards its goals. For many cities and states, the outlined objectives were twofold. First, through implementation of modern social work, cities and states were to put an end to institutional care of dependent children in orphanages and replace that care with placements in foster homes within the context of families. Second, through effective social policy and efficient government programs cities and states were to reduce the root causes that led families to require out-of-home placements for their children to begin with.

The reason most often cited for children falling into the care of child social agencies until the 1930s had been neglect.[100] Understanding and having in place a standard definition of what neglect entailed became increasingly important in the 1930s as the cases of perceived neglect rose exceedingly fast during the Depression years. Combatting child neglect as opposed to poverty or desertion in the 1930s was made more difficult by the fact that its recognition was not

[99] Reports and Minutes from 1933, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[100] Gordon, Linda, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 146.

always an easy task in times of economic depression. At the 1933 White House Conference on Children, neglect was defined as a situation, "when, through the culpable neglect of their parents, children are suffering from hunger, insufficient clothing, improper housing and sleeping conditions, or living in the midst of filth and squalor."[101]

To enforce the standard put forward at the 1933 White House Conference, social workers had to be able to distinguish the culpability of parent towards their children's wellbeing, especially if that wellbeing was substandard. That was a high bar to meet given neglect's vague definition. In situations where parents experienced poverty, they might not have had the resources to properly feed, clothe, and house their children. If these parents lacked clear motivation to actively thrust the consequences of poverty onto their children, it became difficult to claim neglect.[102] The possibility of not being able to justify removal of a child from the home setting in light of clear human suffering due to a household's economic distress begged an important question: was poverty and material suffering enough to warrant foster care intervention? Many leaders in the field of child welfare would vehemently disagree with this idea. To separate children from their families for no other reason than poverty was to make a mockery of the tenets of child welfare as they were established during the Progressive Era, which rejected splitting up families simply because of poverty.[103] To do so would only serve to diminish the value of professional casework.

This chapter will discuss the ways in which the Great Depression strained the meager foster care services that existed in Cincinnati in the 1930s, while also highlighting the development of a nascent welfare state at the federal, state, and local levels. Many social work

[101] Ibid, 121.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Rymph, 43.

professionals believed that the emergence of public welfare programs through New Deal legislation such as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) and federal survivor's and unemployment insurance would end the family insecurity that often necessitated a child's out-of-home placement.[104] Reformers expected that these programs would lessen the role of poverty in separating children from their families and work toward the Progressive Era goal of reducing the number of children placed in out-of-home care altogether.[105] This chapter will explore the ways in which individuals, families, and children interacted under intense economic pressure with new government programs in the setting of Cincinnati.

No Longer Just a Concept

During the Depression, foster care in private family homes was more than an innovative concept; it was a mainstream ideal. The extent to which private foster care had become the dominant, ideal standard for the care of dependent children was evidenced by contemporary advertising campaigns from the Community Chest, "It is the ancient law of humanity that children come first. Chest agencies provide social service investigation, clinical diagnosis of the problem, temporary foster care, and return of the child to its family at the earliest possible moment"[106] Even in advertising, local leaders were intent to point out the number of ways child welfare was under reform.

The spirit of reform in Cincinnati and its stated goals of phasing out institutional care of dependent youth while simultaneously reducing the conditions that caused child dependency met a critical juncture in the Depression years. Reformers had to figure out how they could replace

[104] Ibid, 44.
[105] Ibid.
[106] *Enquirer*, March 1937, n.d., here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

supposedly outdated methods of caring for dependent children with a rationalized, bureaucratic system governed by standards, licensing, and the best modern practices under difficult circumstances. They had to grapple with greater demand for services, budgetary limitations, and a shortage of foster parents. Despite these challenges and a severe strain on public and private resources, the Depression years represented a remarkable opportunity for Cincinnati leaders to continue their work of reforming the city's child welfare network. Though Cincinnati leaders during the Depression expressed a greater sense of obligation to care for dependent children, their concerns did not necessarily translate into increased public services for dependent children. More often, county commissioners designated money to help support private charities and institutions carry out the work of caring for the area's vulnerable youth. Cincinnati was still loathe to pursue heavy public contributions to child welfare and was heavily reliant on private charitable institutions. The greater obligation felt by city leaders to care for dependent children is best characterized as a consequence of pressures created by widespread economic hardship. Though it might have dampened progress, the lack of city governmental leadership with regard to child welfare did not put a stop to child welfare reform, especially at Cincinnati's child social agencies and institutions who continued to adapt their missions to offer expanded foster care services and professionalize the social work performed in the city.

Same Institutions, New Mission

In Cincinnati, as in other American cities in the 1930s, the Great Depression created more demand for welfare relief in programs such as foster care.[107] The poverty of this era, in itself, does not explain why more children were placed into Cincinnati's child welfare system. Rather greater demand for out-of-home placements can be explained by the increased conflict that many

[107] Gordon, 146.

Cincinnati homes experienced. Contemporary studies have shown that the economic depressions which generate the highest rates of poverty also worsen family violence.[108] Poverty and unemployment inflict additional stresses on families. Higher numbers of family violence, neglect by physical deprivation, and other hardships increased the amount of casework performed by Cincinnati's social workers during the Depression years.[109] The increased demand for welfare relief in the 1930s necessitated a response on the part of city leaders in Cincinnati.

The conditions of the Depression were not helped by the fact that the federal government, at least in the early years of the economic crisis, offered little direct relief for dependent youth who suffered from rampant physical deprivation. Grace Abbot, who served as the national director of the Children's Bureau said as much in 1932 when she estimated that at least 6 million children, which constituted one-fifth of preschool and school children across the United States, were impacted by poor nutrition, inadequate housing, and a lack of medical care.[110] Early solutions by the Roosevelt administration to this problem included the Child Health Recovery Program (CHRP) which was passed in 1933, that concentrated on providing emergency food and medical care to the country's neediest children.[111] Dependent and neglected youth were more likely than other segments of America's child population to qualify for the CHRP.

However well-intentioned this program was, it produced lackluster results in accomplishing its stated goals, in part due to the fact that individual states under great economic

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[108] Ibid.
[109] *Enquirer*, March 1937, n.d., here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[110] Lindenmeyer, Kriste, *"A Right to Childhood": The U.S. Children's Bureau and Child Welfare, 1912-46* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1997), pp. 163, 176-195, as presented in *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children*, ed. Anya Jabour (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), pp. 312.
[111] Ibid, 313.

stress were unable to make contributions to state-run programs that would have supported the CHRP's aims. The CHRP was the New Deal's first and only federal relief program for young children until the implementation of the 1935 Social Security Act.[112] The greatest developments to come out of this legislation that impacted the wellbeing of dependent children were ADC and federal survivor's and unemployment insurance. But even these programs only assisted children with at least one living parent who was capable offering a nurturing home environment. New Deal programs did little to address the needs of neglected children without nurturing parents. In 1934, the Children's Bureau estimated these children to number 300,000 in the United States, approximately 1% of all Americans nineteen and under.[113] Of these, three-fifths lived in institutions, and the rest in foster homes.[114] Legislation enacted by the federal government was actively changing the profile of children in the care of agencies and institutions, which in turn affected how communities approached caring for dependent children.

City leaders in Cincinnati did respond to the increased demand for child welfare services in the 1930s, though they often stopped short of introducing new public programs. Notably, Hamilton county commissioners partnered with Community Chest organizers around more frequent and more intentional appeals directed to supporting the area's child social agencies and institutions.[115] Undoubtedly some local leaders might have desired increased support of the city's vulnerable youth by taxpayer dollars, but they were limited by a public which remained skeptical of increased public child welfare programs.

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid, 317.
[114] Ibid.
[115] *Enquirer*, July 14, 1930 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

The aversion of taxpayers and politicians to new public programs was not a sentiment unique to Cincinnati. Many cities and states did not want to fund additional public programs at a time when their collected tax revenue was collapsing from prolific unemployment. A report compiled by the Children's Bureau's in 1932 and presented in the Senate by Robert La Follette cited deep cuts in existing state and local programs for children, to the extent that the Children's Bureau believed it could no longer rely on parents or states and local communities to serve as the primary providers for children's needs.[116] The effect of greater needs for welfare services and diminished pubic resources was a general feeling of discouragement for those in Cincinnati who wished to do what they perceived to be needed in the emergent conditions of the Depression.

Another unfortunate result of the lack of public support for child welfare is that it strained the overwhelmingly private network of charity that existed in Cincinnati and challenged its ability to institute modern foster care in lieu of supposedly outdated modes of care. The Cincinnati Department of Welfare relied heavily on the private sector to combat the ravages of the Depression. Historian Lyle Koehler found that in Cincinnati, "various charities—many of them with some public welfare monies—spent $1,000,000 in assisting the victims of the Depression in 1931 and over two million in the next year, as 3,721 families were aided in 1929, 6,024 in 1930, 13,942 in 1931, and 23,188 in 1932."[117] These agencies relied heavily on donations from private citizens to distribute money, food, and clothing to those in need.

Yet, the private sector was not capable of entirely meeting Hamilton County's relief needs. As the Depression deepened, private money donations to the Community Chest dropped from $1.6 million in 1933 to $500,000 in 1934 and $250,000 in 1936.[118] At the same time, city

[116] Lindenmeyer, 312.
[117] Koehler, 137.
[118] Ibid, 138.

and county spending in welfare increased from $1.8 million in 1932 to $11.6 million 1935.[119] During this period, many individuals and philanthropists that had previously supported private appeals such as the Community Chest found that they had less discretionary money available to donate.

The reduction in private funds for welfare services affected some segments of Cincinnati's population more than others. For example, the drop-off in private donations had a disproportionate impact on Cincinnati's African American community. Many of the changes that took place in African American child welfare during the 1930s were legacies of developments in prior decades. In the 1920s as orphanages began to integrate and collaborate both with each other and Hamilton County, a few of the largest black orphanages refused to cooperate and receive public money out of a sense of duty felt by African American leaders to care for their community independently. This decision made the primary administers of child welfare in Cincinnati's African American community highly dependent on private individuals' ability and willingness to make donations to their institutions. The principal contributors to Cincinnati's black orphanages were often African American themselves.[120] Black orphanages' reliance on private donations from primarily black donors had dramatic consequences in the context of the Depression. While white unemployment in Cincinnati peaked in 1933 at 28% and subsequently began to decline, black unemployment skyrocketed to 54% in 1933 and remained above 50% for the next three years before declining.[121] By 1935, 61% of African Americans were on welfare relief of some kind compared with 17.2% of whites.[122] This statistic came at a time when the black population

[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid, 135-136.
[122] Ibid, 149.

was growing at twice the rate of the white population in Cincinnati.[123] Population increases and a shortage of opportunity for gainful employment created the conditions that required more African Americans to seek welfare assistance. But the high rates of unemployment also impacted the ability of African Americans to financially support Cincinnati's black orphanages, and consequently, between 1929 and 1934, private donations to the Orphan Asylum for Colored Children dropped 45% and the Shelter Home for Colored Children ceased to function.[124]

The closure of some of Cincinnati's private orphanages impacted the ability of other leading child social agencies and institutions to implement reforms in care as they had to deal with greater volumes of children in their custody. For example, from January 1, 1930, to April 15, 1931, the number of children in the care of the Children's Home alone increased from 850 to 1,070.[125] Due to increases in applications, cases of physical neglect as a result of poverty no justified boarding-out intervention.

The Stigma of Boarding-Out

Regardless of the reasons that preceded the need for out-of-home placement, however, boarding-out one's child in the 1930s was perceived as a sign of familial decay. Cincinnati's child agencies and institutions began to have to confront the stigmas that often surrounded an individual who surrendered their child into foster care in order to secure his or her best interests.

Cincinnatians viewed the act of parents placing their children in an institution as a sign of broader family life deterioration. Many newspaper articles and publications from the era stated that families who were separated by a child's out-of-home placement must have also suffered

[123] "Needs Presented By Directors Of Chest Agencies; Emergency Basis Minimums Are Not Adequate Now," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 21, 1938.
[124] Taylor, Henry Louis, *Race and the City: Work, Community and Protest in Cincinnati 1820-1970* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994): 52.
[125] Ibid, 61.

from another physical, mental, or moral deficiency. A widely known fact among child welfare workers during the Depression era was that two thirds of children in the care of institutions had both parents living.[126] Because of this fact, many Cincinnatians speculated that something had to occur within a family unit to lead to its disintegration where parents could no longer provide a wholesome life for their children. Unemployment was often cited as a cause for familial decay as it was seen as destructive to the cohesion of the family. A journalist commenting on the melancholy of the unemployed mused,

> "The man who is forced into idleness by conditions beyond his control not merely suffers for want of income. His spirit has suffered a numbing blow. His idleness for him is an industrial defeat. He has a sense of impotence in the face of a great need. He is not the man he is in better times."[127]

The deterioration of morale among adults, in this case the father, was viewed as something impacting the family unit. Social workers talked about the angst and despair that permeated the rest of the family.[128] Loyalties, they claimed, would be strained to the breaking point. If those without work during the Depression could never again could find employment, many Cincinnati leaders expected the family unit to eventually dissolve.

Such concern led many civic leaders to advocate for stronger relationships between child welfare administers to act as a sort of buffer against the contagious effects of unemployment on child development. The actions taken by Cincinnati's child social agencies in an environment of high unemployment demonstrate their unremitting commitments to modernizing child welfare in

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[126] Ibid, 74.
[127] *Enquirer*, 1931, n.d., here quoted from Family Service of Cincinnati Area Records, n.d., Mss 594, Box 16, Volume 17, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[128] Social Worker Notes, Family Service of the Cincinnati Area Records, 1880-1971, n.d., Mss 594, Box 13, Volumes 13-14, Cincinnati Museum Center.

the city. At the suggestion of the of the Ohio Department of Welfare, in 1931 the Children's Home, Catholic Charities, and other agencies from Clermont, Butler, Warren, and Montgomery counties met in Middletown, Ohio for the purpose of forming a closer affiliation to increase the effectiveness of institutional care for children.[129] Their talks led to the creation of the Southwestern Ohio District, a network of child social agencies whose mission incorporated both foster care services and adoption for dependent or neglected children. Closer affiliation among agencies allowed for individual institutions to deal with the greater number of dependent children cared for during the Depression years. In one of the first instances of this cooperation, the Children's Home sent child referrals to St. Edmund's home and the New Orphan Asylum for Colored Children when they were unable to provide care themselves.[130]

Reform Under Pressure

Throughout the Depression, social work professionals continued to reform the structure and operations of Cincinnati's public and private welfare agencies despite enormous economic hardship. Organizations such as the Women's Club of Cincinnati, an organization committed to enriching lives through philanthropic action and educational opportunities, remained intent on modernizing foster care in Cincinnati.[131] Though the conditions of the Depression slowed reforms and sometimes limited overall progress, Cincinnati's child social agencies and

[129] *Enquirer,*1931, n.d., here quoted from Family Service of Cincinnati Area Records, n.d., Mss 594, Box 16, Volume 17, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[130] An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Catholic Foster Care Program in Cincinnati, unpublished manuscript by Virginia E. Madigan, undated, RG 15.4, Box 1, Folder 3, Research Papers, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[131] Reports and Minutes from 1933, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.

institutions remained committed to transitioning their services away from institutional care towards modern foster care.[132]

Cincinnati's orphanages, agencies, and institutions were promoted to the public during the Depression as something fundamentally different from what they may have been a decade prior.[133] United appeals administered by the Community Chest advertised Cincinnati's child welfare institutions as agencies attempting to address children's need for greater education, recreational, and character-building opportunities.[134] These agencies, they promised, were more attentive to the individual, specific needs of families. Advertising campaigns suggest that Cincinnati's private child welfare network continued to incorporate modern social work theory despite the intense pressure of the Great Depression.

Organizations such as the Women's City Club of Cincinnati contributed to Depression reforms by advocating against what they saw as children becoming 'wards' of institutions.[135] To mitigate pressure from these groups and others, institutions continued to increase the proportion of the children they served by foster care placements and often added to their staffs credentialed social workers capable of reforming agency operations from within. An example of Cincinnati institutions' renewed push to hire credentialed social workers occurred in August of 1930, when Miss Edna V. Tanner was added to the staff of the Children's Home.[136] She came from the Franklin County Children's Home where she was in the home-finding department. She received her Master's degree in economics from Columbia University and graduated with a Ph.D. in

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Reports and Minutes, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[136] "Family Unity Urged As Nation Need By New Employee," *Cincinnati Enquirer,* August 2, 1930.

sociology from The Ohio State University. She spent four years inspecting factories in Ohio to make sure people were in compliance with child-labor laws.[137] The premium placed upon the credentials and experience of individuals such as Edna Tanner illustrates sustained professionalization of social work.

Contemporaneous with the push for professionalism in child welfare was the commitment to transforming institutional care of children, if not into foster care, at least towards something more reminiscent of a home setting. In an article of the Children's Home Record, the institution's director, Dr. Ascham, declared that orphanages had to reshape their methods so as to give their children, as far as possible, the benefits of normal home and family life.[138] He pointed out that there was a distinct trend toward the increasing use of boarding homes for needy children, but stated that unless these were to be good and high-grade homes, there would be little advantage for the child.[139]

As foster care programs were increasingly run by certified, trained professionals, city leaders in Cincinnati began to fear that social workers were becoming too qualified.[140] Some questioned whether professional social workers were in danger of becoming too "highbrow"' to be of real service to the majority of those needing their aid.[141] Many wondered if there was a tendency on the part of professional social workers to regard persons as specimens rather than human

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[137] Ibid.
[138] *Children's Home Record*, August 2, 1931, Mss 532, Box 36, Volume 61, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[139] Ibid.
[140] *Times Star*, January 27, 1933 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[141] Ibid.

beings.[142] In one critique of modern social work, Ellery F. Reed stated, "there is a lack of clear concept and definition of social work."[143]

Regardless of these criticisms, the majority of local leaders in Cincinnati's child social agencies took a humane approach to their work. Many of them felt that dependent children in institutions throughout the city should have women trained in child care as institutional foster mothers.[144] In order to make this goal a reality, Cincinnati's child welfare institutions hired professionals for the sole purpose of offering dependent children affectionate care even while living in institutional settings. To encourage foster parents to incorporate modern social work philosophies into their homes, groups such as the Children's Division of the Ohio Welfare Conference pushed for the establishment of parent associations to bring about better care of dependent children. Membership in these parent associations was often based upon the fulfillment of a required amount of training and experiences.[145] At one particular meeting for the Children's Home program for the continuing education of foster parents, Dr. Ascham said to the parents, "You are social workers. Since you have taken children into your homes, it is your duty to prepare yourselves to understand the ways of those children."[146]

The Depression years were consequential for the establishment and development of modern child welfare in Cincinnati. The city's institutions continued to reform themselves and professionalize their staffs while under intense economic pressure. Private foster care and

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Ellery F. Reed, "The Normal New Cost of Social Work in Cincinnati and Hamilton County." *Social Forces*, vol. 10, no. 4 (1932): 582. doi:10.2307/2569906.
[144] *Times Star*, September 13, 1933 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[145] *Times Star*, October 19, 1933 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[146] Ibid.

thorough casework were no longer an idea, but a standard pursued by every major child welfare agency in Cincinnati. The remarkable developments of the 1930s put into focus the dramatic changes that took place in the span of the two decades following the first White House Conference. By the end of the 1930s, with poverty and physical deprivation no longer the main contributor leading to dependent children's out-of-home placements, special attention began to be given to issues affecting the cohesion of the American family. In following periods of child welfare in Cincinnati, a growing concern would develop over the effects of family disruptions and their ability to upend a child's wellbeing.

III. Peace, Prosperity, and the Industrial Family Complex: Child Welfare in Postwar Cincinnati

As American soldiers returned home following their service in Europe and Asia in World War II, many desired to build for themselves a peaceful home life. Following the prolonged traumas of economic turmoil and horrific war, many Americans sought to "replenish themselves in goods and spirit, to undo, by exercise of collective will, the psychic disruptions of the immediate past."[147] This goal was accomplished by the expansion and enforcement of strict family norms where households were sorted by gender-segregated roles. This process often served to the detriment of historically disenfranchised demographics, especially women and dependent children.

Women had made remarkable inroads into the American workforce during World War II only to experience rapid regression to traditional domestic roles in the postwar years. Throughout the war, married women were not only tolerated in the paid labor force, but they were actively encouraged to take "men's jobs" as a patriotic duty to ensure wartime production.[148] The challenge created by fathers fighting overseas and mothers in factories was not seen as a problem of working parents, but one of working mothers. In 1941, 1.5 million women were working in war industries, and by the end of the conflict, 5.5 million mothers of children under fourteen were doing so.[149] These women were often subject to various criticisms for supposedly abandoning their household responsibilities. In one illustrative instance, J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, attacked working mothers in a 1944 article

[147] May, Elaine Tyler, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, NY: Basic Book Publications, 1988), pp. 58.
[148] Ibid, 59.
[149] Rymph, 75.

entitled, "Mothers… Our Only Hope."[150] In this piece, Hoover pointed to parental incompetence and neglect as the causes for 'perversion' and 'crime.' He claimed that war jobs were not appropriate for mothers, "She already has her war job… Her patriotic duty is not on the factory front. It is on the home front!"[151]

Though some federal programs supplied childcare to some working mothers beginning in 1943, they did little to shield them from vilification for purportedly neglecting their children. Whatever the size of gains for women during WWII, they were short-lived. By the end of the war, societal pressure for women to perform their patriotic duty in factories transitioned to pressure campaigns directed at women, encouraging them to return to the domestic sphere. Popular logic held that men returning to the workforce after fighting overseas desired 'the good life,' which, as historian Peter Filene observed, meant employment and security to men who had lived through depression and war.[152] Men in this period were more likely than past generations to settle for lower-paying but secure jobs than they were to take risks for uncertain rewards or advancement.[153] They were also less likely to turn to industrial society for the promise of happiness and more likely to turn to the family. Understanding the context of men's women's lived experiences is important to situating state of care available to dependent children.

It's the Family, Stupid

The family unit became the subject of intense scrutiny in the 1950s and throughout the postwar years. Much of this added attention came from a postwar obsession with non-marital

[150] May, 74.
[151] Ibid.
[152] May, 87.
[153] Ibid.

sex. According to voices in academia such as Alfred Kinsey, sex was out of control.[154] The biologist and professor of entomology and zoology at Indiana University shocked the nation with meticulous scientific detail in 1948 and 1953 with his documentation of widespread premarital intercourse, homosexual experiences, masturbation and extramarital sex among American men and women.[155] Those individuals who were engaged in these deviant acts were defined as irresponsible, immature, and weak.[156]

The social pressure to appear mature, responsible, 'normal,' and patriotic contributed to a rush by many into marriage.[157] Real numbers support this argument. In the years of American involvement in the war alone, over one million more families were formed than would have been expected during normal times, lowering the average marriage age and accelerating the rate of marriage across the country.[158] By the 1950s, the proportion of American adults who were married rose from 60% in 1940 to 66% in 1950. The number of single adults fell to what was at the time a century low of 23%.[159] These trends were, at least in part due to the popular belief that the alleged dangers of race suicide, sexual promiscuity, and careerism could be avoided by adhering to family values.[160] The containment of premarital sex was central to this effort, but it necessarily created other consequences. An externality of the push for marriage and containment of deviant behaviors is that it effectively worked to further marginalize dependent children.

[154] Michael Bronski, "The Classification of Sex: Alfred Kinsey and the Organization of Knowledge." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 25, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 520.
[155] May, 101.
[156] Ibid, 94.
[157] Ibid, 98.
[158] Ibid, 59.
[159] Ibid, 20.
[160] Ibid, 100

These children were often themselves either the product of or associated with their parents' irresponsibility, immaturity, and weakness because of this era's emphasis on marriage.

One of the lasting consequences of the Depression years was that neglect by physical deprivation was no longer the greatest contributor of children to out-home-placements in institutions and foster care. New Deal programs such as ADC and federal survivor's and unemployment insurance were effective in reducing the economic hardship endured by families that might precede an out-of-home placement or child dependency. But these federal programs only addressed the needs of dependent children with at least one living parent who was willing to provide for their children a nurturing home environment. The children who remained in private and public child welfare systems after the introduction of these programs increasingly represented families with high rates of violence and disruptions. Dependent children in the postwar years were also more prone than their peers to juvenile delinquency.[161]

In the postwar years, it became conventional wisdom among child welfare workers that the foster care population as a whole had experienced greater trauma than in the past.[162] This understanding affected perceptions of foster children, their biological parents, and their foster parents. Concepts like 'hard-to-place' and 'family pathology' entered the child welfare lexicon, starkly revealing the economics of child placement.[163] By the late 1950s, these terms would become increasingly associated with race and delinquency. Foster children were marked with undesirability, even as agencies began to search for permanent homes for them more aggressively than ever before. It is in this vein that this chapter coins the term 'industrial family

[161] Ibid, 160.
[162] Rymph, 113.
[163] Ibid.

complex,' both to highlight the greater rigidity of the American family structure following World War II and by doing so illustrate its restrictiveness.

In Cincinnati, the greatest contributor to foster care placements in the post war years was family violence, abuse, and neglect different from what had long preceded out-of-home placements in the past.[164] Many local leaders in social work feared the increasing disruptions caused by internal stress being experienced within families. An indicator of familial stress in the postwar period can be measured in the number of divorce proceedings in Hamilton County. Divorce underwent a noticeable uptick both during and immediately following the conclusion of World War II.[165] This trend had real consequences on children as one Cincinnati caseworker conceded, "it is harder to find a home for a child who is the product of a war divorce than a true orphan."[166] Indeed phrases like 'hard-to-place' and 'family pathology' had truly entered the local lexicon as foster parents were often slow to accept care of these dependent children, lest they too be associated with the negative attributes of the children's parents.

The stigma associated with divorce negatively affected children for whom parental separation was the reason for their state of neglect or dependency. For children from these situations, social work professionals attempted to offer them stability and affectionate care. Child social agencies in Cincinnati actively fought the stigmas surrounding children receiving welfare as a result of family disruptions in advertising campaigns found in everything from newspaper articles to sermons and advice columns.[167] The advocacy by Cincinnati's child social agencies against the marginalization of children from divorce largely came from religious leaders of

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[164] "The Time is Short," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 19, 1944.
[165] "Family Life Struck by General Collapse," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 26, 1946.
[166] "War Marriages Leave Host of Children Lacking Homes," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 1, 1946.
[167] *Enquirer*, April 1947, n.d., here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

private agencies, who by this time, still accounted for one third of the casework undertaken in Hamilton County.[168] Their appeals attempted to garner public sympathy for children rendered dependent by an unfortunate situation like divorce. The pleas by Cincinnati's private child social agencies reflect a commitment to address the needs of dependent youth despite a public's increasingly negative understanding of them. During this period Cincinnati ranked above the national average in its reliance on private social agencies to administer child welfare services.[169] The city was 20% more reliant on private agencies than the national average and 9.1% below per capita spending on welfare.[170]

Family Trauma and Institutional Persistence

Postwar Cincinnati saw the average marriage age drop and rates of marriage accelerate, in part due to an end to widespread wartime disruptions in domestic life alongside a rush into marriage and parenthood.[171] The period's pressure for young couples to enter into marriage was partially meant to decrease the numbers of single women in the city who were seen as a potential threat to stable family life and to the moral fiber of the city.[172] Contemporary sociology textbooks claimed that social freedom and employment for women would cause sexual laxity, moral decay, and the destruction of the family.[173] The increased rates of marriage that began in the late 1940s and continued into the 1950s were, to many Cincinnatians, a welcome sign of what they perceived to be greater virtue. Local perceptions of what virtue was, were rooted in the

[168] Human Services, Child Welfare Statistics 1959-1986, Mss 4536, Box 53576A, Ohio History Connection.
[169] Ibid.
[170] *Catholic Telegraph*, March 30, 1943 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[171] May, 59.
[172] Ibid, 68.
[173] Ibid, 69.

increasingly enforced concept of the 'normal family.' In Cincinnati, ideas of 'family normalcy' were enforced by opinion columns in the city's newspapers and periodicals and often glossed over those who deviated from the accepted standard. The lack of public conversation about helping those who fell outside of the restrictive concept of the 'normal family' made it harder for child social agencies to properly administer affectionate services to the children within their care.

By the postwar period, social workers in Cincinnati were in basic agreement on the necessity of fostering services to give dependent children a wholesome home environment. Many agencies were frustrated by the slow transition towards a system of foster care that centered on private boarding care but were limited by the lack of available parents willing to open their homes to foster children. In the years immediately preceding the postwar family boom, 34% of dependent children in Cincinnati continued to be cared for in institutions while the other 66% were placed in foster homes.[174] Even as the number of dependent children in Cincinnati decreased proximately after WWII, there were not enough foster homes to meet demand. Much of the shortage had to do with other changes taking place in Cincinnati. New models of home construction that became popular after the war often accommodated families with only two bedrooms. Families living in these types of homes were discouraged from taking in foster children by caseworkers because their homes literally could not fit them.[175] Another factor contributing to a shortage of foster parents was that couples were having more children and were less likely to take in outside kids while raising their own.[176] What the shortage of

[174] Reports and Minutes from 1943, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[175] *Enquirer*, January 1947, n.d., here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[176] Ibid.

available homes often meant is that, while private foster care was the undisputed goal for social workers, many children continued to be placed in traditional institutional care.

Many of Cincinnati's leading orphanages, such as the New Orphan Asylum for Colored Children, by this period maintained outdated and overcrowded facilities.[177] In the case of the New Orphan Asylum, their situation of overcrowding resulted in the agency having to refuse children under five years of age.[178] These instances often led to renewed conversations about the role of local government in assisting private agencies in the task of meeting the demand for child welfare services. Both during and following WWII, assistance in child welfare services from the government oftentimes took the form of city levies such as the one passed in May 1944 to support child social agencies.[179] The trouble that city leaders ran into when they attempted to establish initiatives and increase aid aimed at child welfare was that local Catholic leaders remained skeptical of public child welfare.[180] Many Catholics saw the emergence of public welfare services as a direct threat to their ministries.[181] The resistance of Cincinnati's Catholic population towards public forms of child welfare can be traced to the continued strength of private Catholic welfare services in Cincinnati through the 1950s.[182] In the 1950s, many restrictions existed which prohibited the placement of children in agencies or with parents who did not share their racial or religious affiliation. Large swaths of Cincinnati's population identified as Catholic and Catholic Charities represented the largest adoptive organization in the

[177] *Times Star*, March 1, 1947 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Reports and Minutes from 1949, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[180] Letters to Bishop George Rehring, Social Catholic Welfare Conference, Legal Department, 1950, RG2.1, Box 1, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Historical Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[181] Ibid.
[182] "Give Where it Does the Most Good," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 20, 1950.

city. These two realities helped to prop up private child social agencies, especially Catholic ones, in Cincinnati.

None of this is to say that no progress was made in postwar Cincinnati in the way of improving the efficiency and efficacy of child welfare services. Social workers concentrated their efforts on remedying a shortage of available foster care parents. By the mid-1950s child welfare professionals and advocates were producing a flurry of reports and studies on foster parenting as they attempted to determine who foster parents were, how they could best be recruited and retained, and how they could be brought into line with individual agency's understandings of best practices.[183] Child welfare service providers nationally feared that changes in the foster child population and new therapeutic functions of foster care would come as new roles for foster parents. They feared that new responsibilities and stresses associated with being a foster parent might dissuade individuals from becoming foster parents.[184] Charged with helping children whose birth families were found to be in some way dysfunctional, foster parents had to be willing to endure stigmas associated with dependent children in order to provide a nurturing environment. The great irony of the placement process for dependent children in the postwar years is that after being labeled as deviant by 'normal' society, dependent children were often placed into family settings by child social agencies into the homes of 'normal families.' Dependent children consistently represented outsiders looking in. It was, of course, hard to recognize a normal family, but there was a sense in the postwar years that it meant a family with a successful marriage that was able to meet 'more than the ordinary stresses of life.'[185] Thus, families needed to be both ordinary and extraordinary, normal and not normal.

[183] Rymph, 92.
[184] Rymph, 101.
[185] Ibid.

When to use Foster Care?

Cincinnati's continued reliance on both institutional care and foster care forced child welfare leaders in the city to contrive a system that considered the individual needs of dependent children in order to determine their placement arrangements. Some of the first efforts to rank the needs of dependent children in the context of the postwar shortage of foster parents was undertaken by members of the Child Welfare Study Group of the Woman's City Club of Cincinnati. Their survey beginning in 1943 of the Child Welfare Program at the Glenview-Hillcrest Schools was one of the first comprehensive investigations of public child welfare in Hamilton County.[186] The project allowed for the Woman's City Club to make informed decisions in its aimed goal of encouraging the expansion of foster care in Cincinnati. Their research pointed to areas where public and private agencies could further collaborate to meet the needs of dependent youth. Among the items discussed in the Woman's City Club report was the urgent need of preventive work in the field of juvenile delinquency. Due to more and more instances of social workers and courts being contacted by families to report juvenile delinquents and a lack of placement facilities, many dependent children were unable to have out-of-home arrangements made.[187]

With both budgetary limitations and pressures working to dissuade individuals from becoming foster parents, Cincinnati had to rely on foster care as well as institutional care. The two major placement strategies had to be conscientiously applied to the circumstances of individual children. Cincinnati's child social agencies and institutions did not consider institutional care of dependent children to be in competition with foster care. For certain private

[186] Reports and Minutes from 1943, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[187] Ibid.

agencies such as the New Orphan Asylum for Colored Children, the two types of out-of-home care were viewed as complementary resources in the field of child welfare. A child's placement situation was sound only if it provided services of adequate quality and relevance to that child's individual needs.

Though very few professional social workers saw something constructive, and still fewer, anything good in institutions, by the end of WWII institutions often found themselves trying to convince the public that they could give children a version of family life. For many of these agencies' leaders, the continued value of institutions came in the form of community.[188] The word group, in the terminology of social work, implied a network of relationships which were not just passing relationships but those which could be very close and very significant to anyone who was exposed to them and who participated in such groups.[189] Many private child welfare leaders took pride in the fact that their institutions gave dependent children an excellent opportunity to live in a group setting. A cited advantage in the controlled environment of an institution was that it provided an opportunity for social workers to observe children under various living conditions—having meals together; going to bed; interacting with other children.[190] More eyes were available in an institution to read child behaviors and responses, which made it easier for children to disgorge hostile feelings with trained staff on hand. Institutions were often less emotionally charged than family environments, with its stronger personal involvement. An institution had the potential to render a maturing quality.

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[188] Ibid.
[189] Social Worker Notes, Family Service of the Cincinnati Area Records, 1880-1971, n.d., Mss 594, Box 13, Volumes 13-14, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[190] "Wholesome Family Life Insures Sound Citizenship: Five Years of Family Consultation Service" New Orphan Asylum for Colored Children Records, 1875-1967, n.d., Mss 1059, Box 1, Folder 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

The defense of institutional care can seem counterproductive to expanding access to family foster care. However, the lack of foster parents in the 1950s forced child social agencies to decide which children in their care would best benefit from either private foster care or traditional institutional care. Children who had strong family ties that would make their acceptance of substitute parents difficult were thought to benefit from institutional care, while babies, true orphans, and children with serious health defects were thought to benefit from foster care.[191]

The result of increased household trauma in postwar Cincinnati led to higher rates of juvenile delinquency and out-of-home placements in both institutional and foster care settings even as placements made for physical deprivation decreased. Cincinnati's continued reliance on both institutional care and foster care forced child welfare leaders in the city to contrive a system that considered the individual needs of dependent children in order to determine their placement arrangements. As the prosperity and industrial family complex of the postwar years began to surrender to the incoming turbulence of the 1960s, many private agencies began to take stock of their services and consider reorienting themselves and their ministries within a city experiencing dramatic change. The degree to which Cincinnati's private agencies were able to adapt themselves to the drama of the upcoming decade impacted the care available to needy children in a city that was still heavily reliant on private networks of welfare.

[191] Ibid.

IV. Can't Buy Me Love, But You Can Buy Me Foster Parents in the 1960s

The postwar years cultivated in the minds of many Americans an idealized image of the family unit. Social pressures of the period emphasized a standard of normalcy among American families. Though 'family normalcy' can be a nebulous concept, it was often thought to be young couples engaged in a successful marriage that were able to cope with the stresses of life.[192] Images of family normalcy were frequently associated with newly constructed suburbs replete with pleasantly landscaped lawns and complimented by the presence of children. The slow restricting of family normalcy had enormous impact on the United States' population of dependent children. Home violence and intra-marriage conflict were seldom discussed in social halls and community centers across the country, still less discussed were the children of these homes.[193] By the 1960s, federal programs such as ADC, survivor's and unemployment insurance, as well as state and local government initiatives were actively assisting materially deprived families avoid situations of family separation. As a result, the composite profile of children that remained in the care of child social agencies was changing. Dependent children in this period were more likely than dependent children in the past to have records of juvenile delinquency. It did not help that dependent children in the 1960s suffered from an increasing association not just with the deviance of delinquent acts, but the deviance of their parents from elevated standards of family normalcy. Dependent children in the 1960s represented moral irresponsibility, immaturity, and weakness.[194]

The fear of being associated with these undesirable attributes discouraged many individuals from becoming foster parents, exacerbating a national shortage of available foster

[192] Rymph, 101.
[193] Gordon, 283.
[194] May, 94.

homes. A common hesitation felt by prospective foster parents in this period was that it was more difficult to care for dependent children who they believed bore partial responsibility for their needing an out-of-home placement to begin with. In past decades, the largest contributor to out-of-home placements of dependent children was neglect by physical deprivation usually induced by circumstances of poverty. It was easier to garner public sympathy for dependent children who came from these conditions because a child had no control over the socioeconomic class into which he or she was born. However, when in the 1960s family violence, disruptions, and juvenile delinquency were the main contributors to family separations, many prospective foster parents found it difficult to ignore what they saw as an active mismanagement of individual agency leading to welfare use.[195] To be born into poverty was not subject to one's choice, but the decision to commit a crime and to engage in illicit behaviors was. The interpretation that dependent children were partially responsible for their situation helped to both further marginalize the group and cultivate a more negative perception of them.

The great challenge that began to emerge in the 1960s was a continuation of those seen in the 1950s and related to how child welfare workers might confront the apparent shortage of foster and adoptive parents as the number of children in states of dependency began to steadily increase because of higher instances of divorce and marital conflict.[196] The Director of the Hamilton County Welfare Department, Frederick A. Breyer, confronted this problem when he tried to address the lack of adoptive homes in Cincinnati, and especially in the African American community. Breyer appointed George Peterson to further African American adoptions, decrying the fact that many African American children grew up as wards in foster homes and institutions

[195] Ibid, 116.
[196] "Divorce Rates Go Up," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 15, 1967.

because of a lack of adoptive parents.[197] Many African American children in the care of Cincinnati's child social agencies were eligible for adoption because their parents had relinquished their custodial rights. This reality prompted many welfare leaders in the city to consider new methods to accomplish permanent placement for dependent African American children. Breyer was not alone in his concern about indefinite foster care for Cincinnati's vulnerable African American youth. Many child welfare workers in the area regretted the shortage of adoptive families who could, "give the love and intimacy of family life which can bolster a child during their formative years and give the self-assurance the child will need as an adult."[198] To address the shortage of adoptive parents in the 1960s in the African American community, the Hamilton County Welfare Department brought in groups such as the NAACP and the Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. These groups launched a collective campaign to counter the negative stigmas surrounding dependent youth and garner public sympathy by picturing available children on posters and in pamphlets, and by making extensive appeals in the African American press. Their efforts nearly quadrupled the number of applications for the adoption of black children.[199]

Developments in child welfare in Cincinnati seem to reflect other sentiments of the decade. Concurrent with continued prosperity after WWII, city leaders in Cincinnati attempted to reconcile how it was possible that childhood dependency, neglect, and abuse lingered. Many individuals, especially in the Catholic community, drew inspiration from the morals expressed by Pope John XXIII in his 1963 encyclical, "Pacem in Terris," which declared that a child has a right "to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing,

[197] "Child Welfare Levy Returning for Special Vote," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 12, 1965.
[198] Koehler, 246.
[199] "Tax Asked for Child Relief Here," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, June 12, 1966.

shelter, medical care, rest, and finally, the necessary social services."[200] Programs and campaigns that took place in Cincinnati during this period marked a concerted effort on the part of city leaders to better address the needs of dependent youth in an era where societal pressures more affected their wellbeing than a failure to meet material needs.

Foster Care? Sure, but where's the cash?

A necessary component of a discussion of dependency in families involves not just an analysis of the types of public assistance available to those in impoverished circumstances, but also a study of how a lack of available resources could force someone into a state of dependency. For our purposes here, public assistance can be defined as financial help from tax funds given to individuals or families in need.[201] In Ohio, county welfare departments administered all public assistance programs.[202] Beginning in the twentieth century, these departments were typically run by credentialed social workers as part of a push to professionalize welfare service administration in an increasingly professional field.[203]

Though juvenile delinquency and family violence were main contributors to out-of-home placements nationally, another local explanation for the increase in children cared for by foster agencies and institutions during this period could be the lack of public assistance available to Ohio families relative to other areas of the country. By 1967, approximately 150,000 children and parents were receiving ADC in the State of Ohio. These families collected only 83.5% of the

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[200] Catholic Church. "Peace on Earth: encyclical letter of Pope John XXIII, 'Pacem in Terris,'" (Vatican City: Vatican Publishing House, 1963), http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html, accessed February 12, 2020.
[201] Division of Welfare Services, Ohio Department of Public Welfare, BV6124- BV6126, State Archives Series 2514, Volume 1, Aid to Dependent Children Register of Appeals, 1960-1966, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.

minimum amount required to attain the national standard of health and decency, as established by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, related to the 1965 cost of living.[204] In Cincinnati, Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) payments averaged approximately only 74 cents per day per person for food, clothing and other needs excluding rent and medical care.[205] The cost of people living in poverty can be measured in higher instances of malnutrition, school dropouts, disease—and ultimately in increased welfare outlays and loss of potential earnings. The demographic most impacted by the lack of public resources devoted to protecting families were children, especially those forced from their family homes because of economic instability. Financial insecurity in families often meant that children were exposed to higher instances of stress, trauma, and violence that could negatively influence their psychological development.[206]

Families that sought out welfare relief did not always escape negative externalities. Even if a family received material relief through government programs that might have quelled internal instabilities, a public that distrusted those on welfare payrolls could continue to question them. The public's suspicions were rooted in the belief that it was possible for welfare recipients to take advantage of the system to avoid hard work. However, the vast majority of welfare recipients in the 1960s took advantage of welfare programs not to escape work, but by necessity. Over 90% of people receiving public assistance were unemployable due to age, medical condition, or physical limitation. Of these, approximately 60% were children under working

[204] Resource Fact Sheet on Public Welfare in Ohio, 1967, RG 12.2, Box 4, Folder 12, Social Action Program Funding, 1968-1972, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[205] Hamilton County Welfare- Some Facts, report for Ohio Valley Chapter of NASW by Arnett Wright and George Gilioli, March 1967, RG 12.2, Box 4, Folder 12, Social Action Program Funding, 1968-1972, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[206] Gordon, 146.

age.[207] Avoidance of statistics such as these fed a perception that public welfare was destined to be abused by deviant individuals and that public welfare actively eroded the strength of traditional married households. The conjecture of welfare detractors was obviously exaggerated, as it would be unreasonable to argue a causal relationship between public welfare and declining morality. It there was a causal relationship, by the 1960s one might expect evidence of increased amoral activity such as in cases of child illegitimacy. But there is no indication in existing data that suggests this. Throughout the 1960s only one in five of all reported illegitimate children in the nation received public assistance.[208] In reality over 75% of all children on ADC in Ohio were legitimate children living in traditional families who were experiencing low or no income.[209] Although illegitimate children were more likely to be poor, they made up a minority of the children aided by public assistance programs.

What is true is that even though Ohio was one of the wealthiest states in the nation, in the 1960s the state lagged behind in terms of public welfare payments. In 1962, Ohio ranked 5th among all states in personal income, was the 4th wealthiest in assessed value of property, 3rd in manufacturing in terms of value added to products, but ranked 46th in state tax collections per capita and 30th in payments to needy families with children.[210] The lack of resources dedicated to assisting economically vulnerable families directly impacted large Ohio cities such as Cincinnati.

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[207] Hamilton County Welfare- Some Facts, report for Ohio Valley Chapter of NASW by Arnett Wright and George Gilioli, March 1967, RG 12.2, Box 4, Folder 12,
Social Action Program Funding, 1968-1972, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

[208] "Illegitimacy and Its Impact on the ADC Program," US Dept. of Health, Education, & Welfare, April 1960.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Myths and Facts about Public Welfare in Ohio, Ohio Council of Churches, 1967, RG 12.2, Box 4, Folder 12, Social Action Program Funding, 1968-1972, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

By the early 1960s, Hamilton County's Foster Home and Institutional Placement Program had to expand in order to process and place over 2,000 children annually who were committed as neglected or dependent. These children were supervised by the Welfare Department in boarding homes and institutions.[211] Furthermore, Hamilton County's Welfare Department's Protective Services Program assisted an additional 1,800 children, supervised in their own homes, when their parents had demonstrated a need for help in functioning as parents.[212]

It is important to understand that institutions such as the Hamilton County Welfare Department were affected by levels of funding from state and federal revenue streams. 83% of the funds spent by the Welfare Department in Hamilton County came from federal and state resources.[213] The department existed in the 1960s as a public, tax-supported agency which administered Hamilton County's basic public assistance programs. To receive aid, a person had to prove financial need and fulfill other requirements based upon federal and state laws. Financial assistance was accompanied by other social services. Public service agencies in Hamilton County included the Allen House that gave emergency care to 100 neglected or dependent children each day and Glenview, which was a residential school in a farm setting for 90 delinquent and pre-delinquent boys.[214] These two facilities were offered in addition to the department's foster home and protective services programs. An additional service carried out by the Welfare Department, though markedly smaller, was the public Adoption Program that gave

[211] Hamilton County Welfare Department, March 1, 1967, 53,576A, State Archives Series 4536, Volume 1, Child Welfare Statistics, 1959-1986, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Hamilton County Welfare Department, 1968, 53,576A, State Archives Series 4536, Volume 1, Child Welfare Statistics, 1959-1986, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[214] Ibid.

the security of a home and parents to 200 children a year.[215] Agencies such as Catholic Charities continued to dominate adoptive services in the county.

Due to relatively low support for public assistance programs coming from the state government and a rapidly increasing population of children being processed by public and private child welfare institutions, Cincinnati leaders found themselves in a financial bind. In 1969, financial constraints culminated in a dramatic move by Hamilton County commissioners to cut the Children's Services budget by $300,000. It took an anonymous donor to give the County Welfare Director the money to ensure that city and county child welfare workers could continue to provide care to local dependent children.[216]

Dramatic events such as this occurrence fundamentally transformed the debate over taxpayer-supported programs directed at dependent youth. Politicians began to publicly support additional tax levies as measures aimed at meeting the demand for services. After the drama of 1969, Hamilton County commissioners were more willing to raise the county sales tax to pay for child welfare expenses. The sales tax increase in 1969 was promised to yield up to $8 million yearly.[217] County commissioners believed that they could not let the county fall into financial disarray, "We are in a financial crisis," was the theme driven home by John E. Held, then the president of the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners. "We hate it, but we have no other choice and it's a party decision all up and down the line."[218]

The principal consequent to come out of Hamilton County's tough finances in the late 1960s, however, was not so much political fallout as it was the opportunity it served for

[215] Ibid.
[216] "His $$$ Will Aid Kids In Foster Homes," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 9, 1969.
[217] "County Saw Sales Tax As Only Choice," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 23, 1969.
[218] Ibid.

governmental stocktaking. At the time, local government was hurting for funds. Institutions and agencies such as Child Services' Hillcrest, Glenview Home, and other public foster care providers were unable to accommodate the heavy demand that they faced. Ironically, public agencies in Hamilton County had to contend with red ink in one of the most affluent periods of the county's history. The implications of the strife endured by public services in this period would have consequences for the future, particularly because it limited the capability of institutions and agencies to combat the stigmas that were increasingly being associated with dependent youth.

Stigmas Endure

The 1960s was the first decade in Cincinnati to feature a widespread debate over dramatically increasing the public's responsibility towards dependent youth. From the vantage of proponents of sales tax increases, the decade's developments marked a turning point towards the community taking care of its most vulnerable communities with serious commitments from public resources. Child welfare was no longer solely dependent on the charity of donations to united appeals such as the Community Chest, now the public could make an intentional guarantee. Conversely, the debate on public welfare also forced a conversation on dependent children and the related taboo subjects that often preceded their birth. As in all debates, there were moments of rancor where ugly mantras created and enforced stigmas for dependent children. This was especially true for racial minorities who required welfare services. In the coming decade, African Americans who sought and received child welfare suffered enormous public backlash. The degree to which Cincinnati regarded welfare recipients with contempt would be especially important, as exploding demand for welfare services in coming years would necessitate further public action.

V. The End of the Beginning: The Rise of Modern Foster Care in the 1970s

The 1960s was a turning point in the history of foster care in Cincinnati. Greater demand for child social services resulted in the greater public commitments to care for dependent youth. There were also several notable developments that quietly began in the 1960s which paved the way for changes in both the structure and perception of child welfare services in Cincinnati in the 1970s. Higher rates of juvenile delinquency combined with an emerging women's movement, issues of race, declining private philanthropy, and a shifting perception of the American family in the 1970s came together to transform existing child welfare networks in the city into the system that we are familiar with today.

A creeping fear to come out of the 1960s was one of juvenile delinquency and its increasing association with dependent youth. Juvenile delinquency is a term that is often applied to describe everything from criminal acts to countercultural behaviors in the 1970s. In the context of this project, juvenile delinquency refers to the habitual committing of criminal acts or offenses by a young person that resulted in their entanglement with the juvenile court system. There was a surge in instances of juvenile delinquency in Cincinnati throughout the 1970s, though these must be interpreted in the context of concurrent increases in population in the preceding years. Cincinnati leaders anticipated the problem of juvenile delinquency as early as 1959 in the Clendenen Report prepared for the Hamilton County Welfare Department, Division of Services for Delinquent Children.[219] The report stated that even if rates of delinquency were held to 1957 levels through 1970, there still would have been a 50% increase in the number of delinquents by 1965 and a 100% increase by 1970 solely due to population increase.[220] In other

[219] Clendenen Report and Related Materials, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 138, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[220] Ibid.

words, a significantly greater proportion of child delinquents within the population of dependent children is not the reason that Cincinnati saw much higher delinquency. Reports such as the Clendenen Report demonstrate that city officials and child agencies knew of the looming rise in delinquency and did not adequately plan. The city juvenile courts and police departments were woefully understaffed and underprepared to meet the demand that would come in the decade.

Following the United States Supreme Court's landmark 1973 decision to legalize abortion in Roe V Wade, Catholic child social agencies attempted to brandish themselves as an alternative to young single mothers that might choose to terminate their pregnancy. Following the Court's decision, both its supporters and opponents entrenched themselves in deep ideological debates that necessarily affected child welfare services.[221] In response to the 'pro-choice' verdict in Roe, a 'pro-life' movement opposed to abortion developed. With support from the Catholic Church and conservative politicians, the pro-life movement helped spawn a number of proposed constitutional amendments barring women's access to abortion, including the Human Life Amendment, debated in Congress in 1974, which sought to bestow legal rights of personhood on "all human beings, including their unborn offspring at every stage of their biological development, irrespective of age, health, function or condition of dependency."[222] The divide in Cincinnati over abortion remains a contested issue thanks in part to the city's large Catholic presence.[223] Among groups most opposed to abortion rights initially were Catholics, and a study in the late 1970s showed that 80% of the women active in the pro-life movement at

[221] *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children*, ed. Anya Jabour (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), pp. 442.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Pew Research, "Views about abortion among adults in Ohio," 2014, accessed March 2, 2020 at https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/ohio/

the time were Catholic.[224] In Cincinnati, Catholics comprised more than 30% of the total population in the 1970s, which was higher than the national average.[225] Many Catholics sought to reorient the pro-choice, pro-life debate by pitching child welfare services such as adoptive or foster care as alternatives to unwanted or surprise pregnancies.[226]

Another factor that came to define modern child welfare services in the 1970s was the issue of race. Specifically, African American critics were increasingly blunt about their views that the American child welfare system was uniquely harmful to African American children.[227] Critics complained that many children were not receiving appropriate services due to racial prejudice and that welfare programs, including foster care, were destroying black family life. By the late 1960s-early 1970s, African American children were tragically overrepresented in foster care nationally, but in Cincinnati, African American children had been overrepresented in agencies and institutions since the 1940s.[228] Many prominent African Americans felt that if the child welfare system were to adequately serve black children, it also needed to have a 'black perspective,' one based on the historical experiences of black children and black communities.[229] This perspective was necessary because by the 1970s, social workers were more likely to interpret poor African American families as neglecting their children because they did not always understand black conceptions of family and kin.[230]

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[224] Luker, Kristin, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 192-210, 213-215 as presented in *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children*, ed. Anya Jabour (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), pp. 442.
[225] Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed March 2, 2020, www.TheARDA.com
[226] Luker, 464.
[227] Rymph, 174.
[228] Reports and Minutes from 1943, Woman's City Club of Cincinnati Records, 1919-1977, n.d., Mss fW872, Box 2, Folder 30, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[229] Rymph, 174.
[230] Ibid, 175.

Private philanthropy, and more precisely, private agencies' control of child welfare administration began to decline in a big way in the 1970s. This development is rather intuitive in light of the great amounts of public resources that began to be devoted to child services in the 1960s—private charities' sway and importance began to decline relative to the overall numbers of children in foster care.[231] In 1959, private agencies handled roughly 1:3 of all casework relating to dependent youth in Ohio statewide and those numbers were largely mirrored in Cincinnati.[232] By 1979, private agencies' share of Ohio's casework had fallen to 1:5 while the ratio in Cincinnati held steady at 1:3.[233] But even in the apparent resilience of Cincinnati's private agencies, important changes were taking place. During 1960s and into the 1970s, many private agencies began to slowly phase out and finally close their facilities that administered institutional foster care. These institutions then proceeded to begin specializing in other services such as adoption or assistance for children with special needs or extreme maladjustment issues.

A final development key to the formation of the modern child welfare system in Cincinnati was a fundamental shift in how individuals imagined the American family and what many perceived to be a decline in family values in late-twentieth-century America. Feminist literature such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* had by the 1970s challenged Americans' traditional assumptions that women would be fulfilled from their housework, marriage, sexual lives, and children. In her book, Friedan wanted to prove that women were unsatisfied and did not have the means to voice their feelings. By the 1970s, her work and others like it were credited with starting second-wave feminism.[234] Second-wave feminism broadened

[231] Child Welfare Statistics, 1959-1986, State Archives Series 4536, Box 53576A, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] May, 212.

the debate on women's rights to include a wider range of issues such as sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, de facto inequalities, and official legal inequalities. Second-wave feminism drew attention to the issues of domestic violence and marital rape, engendered rape-crisis centers and women's shelters, and brought about changes in custody laws and divorce law.[235] These developments altered the dynamics of the American family and impacted child welfare services. Parents in the 1970s wanted to leave a different legacy to their children than the one provided by the model of their own lives.

To many child specialists in Cincinnati, all of these developments were overwhelming. The 1970s were wild, they were consequential, and they set in motion the dynamics of our modern 'system.'

Changes Come to Foster Care

Of the changes to impact child welfare services the most in the 1970s was the reordering of the American family. The 1960s and 1970s reawakened many Americans to the realities of family violence.[236] Casework relating to families was bringing to light issues of domestic violence and was helping battered women as much as abused children.[237] As these issues worthy of public discussion entered the mainstream, children in the care of child social agencies often received increased attention because of the increasingly recognized correlation between instances of family violence and the need for family separation through out-of-home placements. Greater visibility of children in child welfare systems, that had by now transitioned to networks overwhelmingly reliant on foster care placements, meant that individuals began to recognize that foster care was not living up to its initial goals. One of the central tenets of foster care was

[235] Ibid, 213.
[236] Gordon, 290.
[237] Ibid, 298.

supposed to be its impermanence, however, by the 1970s many children were spending their entire childhood in the care of child social agencies, oftentimes enduring multiple home placements.[238] An infamous study by the name of *Children in Need of Parents* by Maas and Engler illustrated the great number of children trapped in indefinite foster care.[239] The study found that around 250,000 children in the United States were lingering in foster care or institutions for years at a time, neither with hope of returning to their biological families nor with prospects of being adopted. Most experienced multiple placements.[240] Concerns over these realities prompted the 'permanency movement' of the 1970s, which included large-scale efforts to find adoptive homes for children considered hard to place. Locally, notable adoption campaigns were undertaken by the Children's Home, Catholic Charities, and Hamilton County's public child service agencies.

Another goal among social workers in the field of child welfare was the desire to improve the condition of children in foster care in the event that they could not be adopted or returned to their biological family. In 1971, the Child Welfare League secured a three year grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) to set up what became known as the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA), along with additional supplemental funding in 1974.[241] Some of the NFPA's early initiatives focused on reforming foster care services to children by improving the relations between foster parents and social workers, promoting more positive public images of foster parents, pursuing legal and tax reforms to protect foster parents,

[238] Ibid.
[239] Maas, Henry S., and Richard E. Engler. *Children in Need of Parents: by Henry S. Maas and Richard E. Engler, Jr., in Collaboration with Zelma J. Felten and Margaret Purvine* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1971).
[240] Ibid, 34.
[241] Rymph, 152.

developing and promoting better foster parent training, and improving board rates and reimbursement for other expenses.[242]

All of these changes to foster care came at a time that witnessed a steep drop in the available supply of adoptable white children, even as the total supply of adoptable children exceeded the supply of adoptive parents. This is due to the fact that African Americans and other racial minorities were overrepresented in child welfare systems around the country.[243] By the 1970s, in Cincinnati and elsewhere this reality led to situations were white couples were adopting African American babies in greater numbers. For some, this was welcome news, particularly among the agencies themselves who wished to relieve overcrowding of black children. To others in the black community, the development was resented as a sign of white people coming in to save children who did not belong to their community.

One particular example of resistance to white adoption of African American children in Cincinnati came from the Neighborhood Family Development Association (NFDA) which was composed of black women from the Cincinnati community. This agency wanted African American children to be raised by African Americans because white adoptions of blacks did "not ultimately serve in the interest of black children, because others are, once again, determining the destiny of black people."[244] The NFDA believed that it was unrealistic for white families to properly deal with "the multiple problems faced by a black child struggling to survive in a hostile, racist environment."[245] Moreover, many NFDA members held that believing white people could learn the black experience would be an insult to the sacrifices and suffering that

[242] Ibid, 152.
[243] Rymph, 174.
[244] *Herald* March 10, 1973 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[245] Ibid.

African Americans had lived through for nearly four hundred years. White adoption campaigns began because of a shortage of black adoptive parents, but even in what may have been well-intentioned efforts on behalf of dependent children, other prejudices crept into the adoption process.[246] Homes with white parents were often given greater consideration because they were seen as more financially stable environments for raising children.[247] The idea that black people were not as economically well-equipped or able to care for children needing homes came out of preexisting, racial biases. If stability was what children needed, many black activists pointed to the white youth revolts of the late 1960s and early 1970s to demonstrate that white people were not able to deal with socializing white children well, let alone black children.[248]

African American critics of foster care decried the potential destruction of black families implied by the overrepresentation of black children in foster care. As early as the 1950s, social workers and other human service professionals constructed these ideas by repeatedly claiming that black single pregnancy was the product of family and community disorganization.[249] Most women in this situation felt that lack of money and adequate housing were their biggest problems, but many got hassles and worse from the agencies meant to help them. Popular stereotypes portrayed the single black mother as burdened by her illegitimate child, by her financial dependency, and by the social and cultural pathology allegedly infecting the black population in the United States.[250] By the mid-1960s, many politicians, taxpayers, and social

[246] Koehler, 302.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Solinger, Rickie, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe V. Wade* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 1-9, 12-13, 15-18 as presented in *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children*, ed. Anya Jabour (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), pp. 399.
[250] Ibid, 400.

analysts had become willing to locate the genesis of problems in the black community and many problems that threatened the white community in the wombs of black unwed mothers.[251] In the 1970s this meant that Cincinnati's child social agencies had to combat racist stigmas perpetrated against African Americans while also trying to care for a disproportionately African American population of dependent children.

All of these developments came against the backdrop of the liberalization of the once stringent rules restricting interracial and interreligious adoptions and foster care.[252] In a movement towards adoption, there were practical dilemmas which threatened to limit the proliferation of adoption without parameters. For example, the Catholic Church was known to take a firm position in opposition to the adoption of children born to Catholic parents by persons of any other religious background.[253] Additionally, racial origin was often seen as something presenting practical if not legal, cultural problems of assimilation into the family and community life of the adoptive parents.[254] In some states, statutory prohibitions of interracial adoptions still existed into the 1970s, though civil rights legislation and court precedents were rapidly striking them down.[255] In Ohio, state law provided that the racial, religious and cultural backgrounds of the child and the adoptive parents must be taken into account and included in the report made to the court by the agency. Though these factors were included in the report, the best interest of the child was, however, the overriding factor to be considered by a court in either granting or refusing adoption or boarding provisions.

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[251] Ibid, 404.
[252] William K. Yost, "Adoption Laws of Ohio: A Critical and Comparative Study" (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland State Law Review, 1972) accessed at https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/clevstlrev/vol21/iss3/2 February 17, 2020.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Solinger, 401.
[255] Yost, 22.

The Decline of Private Philanthropy

One of the most impactful developments in child welfare to come out of the 1970s was the degree to which the public sense of obligation towards dependent youth began to solidify. At the beginning of the decade, there was still no national public assistance program and various states had their own programs with different benefit levels and eligibility standards.[256] Programs also varied on the county level. Hamilton County Commissioners used funds from the ½% sales tax in 1970 to increase aid and programs directed at dependent youth.[257] The tax generated $2.2 million in 1970, of which $1 million went to the Children's Services Division to beef up programs, including payment for foster care and classes for the developmentally delayed. These public commitments were necessary because by the end of the 1960s, the county was providing care for over 4,000 children each year.[258]

The rapid rise in the population of dependent children in Cincinnati was not an isolated event. Other cities and states were attempting to manage the vexing social and economic costs of foster care. This reality can explain why in 1970, President Nixon called on Congress to overhaul and consolidate Federal welfare services and add new aid for child foster care and adoption.[259] Under the president's plan, Federal spending for social services would be increased by $255 million a year, from $555 million to $810 million.[260] Welfare services for the poor were seen as being too fragmented, inflexible, lacking in accountability, and containing serious gaps

[256] The Catholic Conference of Ohio, A Special Supplement on Poverty June 5-7, 1970, Catholic Welfare Conference, Legal Department, RG2.1 Bp George Rehring, Box 1, Archdiocese of Cincinnati Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
[257] "County to up Services, Pay Via Sales Tax," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 23, 1970.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Danziger, Sheldon, *Welfare Reform Policy from Nixon to Clinton: What Role for Social Science?* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 7.
[260] Ibid.

particularly in programs to provide decent homes for displaced children. The Nixon administration hoped to consolidate the 260 Federal project and formula grant programs for services; place more administrative responsibility with the states and free the nation's 85,000 social workers from counseling and eligibility investigations.[261]

Those investigations are especially important to an analysis of Ohio's child welfare laws, where public commitment from the state to find homes for dependent children was much larger than it had been in the past. In 1975, Ohio ranked 22nd in the nation in state and local spending per capita for public assistance, which represented an increase from 36th in 1969.[262] Public assistance programs by the 1970s were an important factor to consider in the study of child welfare because most of the children released from public institutions were placed in their parents' homes or with relatives.[263] Adequate funding for these programs was often a means by which families could prevent the need for additional intervention from child placing agencies.

A large portion of federal, state and local welfare budgets were devoted to providing care for children. At the local level, the Hamilton County Welfare Department spent $5.7 million of county funds in 1971 on children's services. Of this total it paid about $1.7 million to keep nearly 3,000 children in foster homes.[264] Considerable additional support for foster care came from state funds. Despite attempts to reign in the costs of administration, the expense burden on Hamilton County from child social services continued to climb. To some prominent leaders in the county, the emphasis on foster care for dependent children reflected an antiquated sense of priorities.[265]

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[261] Ibid.
[262] US Dept of Commerce, "Survey of Current Business," August, 1976, US Bureau of the Census, "They Need Love"
[263] "According to Report, They Need Love," *Cincinnati Enquirer,* August 16, 1976.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.

An emerging faction began to believe that finding permanent adoptive homes should receive greater attention.

There were several sound reasons to support the rationale of county commissioners. According to a study published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, it cost at least four times as much to raise a foster child from infancy to age 18 as it did an adopted child.[266] The study also mentioned that the costs associated with supporting a child in foster care were rising at an average of over 17% a year.[267] Additionally, there were figures issued by the Child Care Welfare League of America which indicated that up to 50% of foster children in most areas of the country could be placed for adoption if agencies actively sought to do so.[268] In this context, a shift to emphasize adoption as the preferred means of providing for homeless children was seen as a measure that could have lessened the burden on Hamilton County taxpayers. Even more important to consider than the actual dollar cost of an extensive foster-care program was the greater effect of rearing children successive foster homes. Dependent were often emotionally impacted by a life of changing and inadequate foster homes.[269] Even under the best circumstances the reality of not having a real home with one's own parents was traumatic to a child. So, a fixation on foster care served not only to the expense of taxpayers who paid the bills but to the detriment of the children themselves. Since a reduction in the number of children in foster care could only benefit all concerned, it was reasonable for Hamilton County Commissioners to consider adoption as a legitimate area for cutting back expenses. In 1971,

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[266] Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "A Common Thread of Service: A History of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare," accessed March 3, 2020, https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/common-thread-service/history-department-health-education-and-welfare
[267] Ibid.
[268] "Other Programs Available," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, May 13, 1974.
[269] Rymph, 174.

Hamilton County placed only 99 children into adoptive homes out of the thousands of children looked after by public programs.[270] These numbers suggested room for improvement when considering the impact that vacillating between homes had on the life outcomes of a child in foster care. One Cincinnati social worker expressed it this way, "Like it or not, we almost play God, and it's hard to describe how weighty that responsibility is."[271]

Greater amounts of public resources did not just mean that agencies focused solely on adoption. Funds were also used by public agencies to improve foster care and placement conditions for the children in private boarding homes. In 1975, the Ohio Welfare Director Charles W. Bates announced federal approval of grants totaling $363,876 to fund a series of training courses for child welfare personnel from all 88 of Ohio's counties.[272] Among the grants approved was one for $18,293 to the University of Cincinnati for a series of workshops to teach county welfare workers how to train adults to be more effective parents.[273] The courses were geared toward instilling parents with better management and service delivery procedures to help reduce or prevent public dependency. Those types of programs that aimed to help children and their parents defeat cycles of poverty and escape welfare were especially relevant in Cincinnati which was home to 13.6% of Ohio's dependent youth in 1974.[274]

Adoption from Fostering

The transition from private to public dominance in child welfare in Cincinnati had dramatic impacts. For one, it increased the push for adoptions at a time when private charities had already been campaigning for and specializing in adoption services for decades. In the 1970s

[270] Ibid.
[271] "Breaking the Adoption Barriers," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 12, 1973.
[272] "An Example of Good Foster Care," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 20, 1975.
[273] Ibid.
[274] "Child Care Goes to Over 22,000," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 31, 1974.

relaxed placement regimentation by race and religion increased the ability for public agencies to give deserving children quality homes.

Private agencies in Cincinnati recognized the limited need for residential treatment by the 1970s. The orphanages that remained often provided sort-term care in which biological parents, when appropriate, were more involved in counseling and planning.[275] Long-term care was provided through natural or foster families with the cooperation of agencies such as Catholic Charities. In the 1970s the raw number of children being served at any given moment in private institutions was declining even as places such as St. Joseph's were serving as many children as it ever had.[276] This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the length of stay per child was shorter, and the total enrollment at any given moment was smaller. More children were passing through and being returned to their families.

The individualized care program at St. Joseph's was in keeping with the goals suggested by the Child Welfare League of America. It provided for children whose problems stem from material or emotional deprivation but who could accept group living and respond to casework and counseling services. St. Joseph's maintained that institutional care was essential for those children who would not do well in a family setting. For those children that remained in institutional settings, there were new efforts to integrate them into the wider community. In 1971, the administrators of St. Joseph orphanage announced plans to send 60 of the orphanage's 93 children to attend area schools beginning the following school year.[277] Most attended Northwest School District, but some were sent to parochial schools in the neighborhood. At the

[275] *Catholic Telegraph*, February 16, 1973 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[276] Ibid.
[277] *Catholic Telegraph*, April 14, 1971 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

announcement, St. Joseph's Sr. Kateri Maureen SC pointed out that, "Changing times bring changing needs in all areas of health, education and welfare."

Times certainly were changing for private child social agencies. In 1973, St. Joseph Infant and Maternity Ward served 385 young mothers.[278] By the end of the decade, this figure had been reduced to 77.[279] Explanations to explain how these types of social services fell out of favor could be: greater societal acceptance of unwed mothers, parents being generally more supportive of their pregnant daughters, and more unwed young mothers choosing to parent their babies. The decline in enrollment at the infant home led to its final closing. In the 1976, St. Joseph's discontinued its orphan and foster care programs and rebranded itself as a center for severely and profoundly handicapped children.[280] The decade that began as one of dramatic change sounded the death knell for private agencies that had long dominated the administration of child welfare services in Cincinnati.

[278] *Catholic Telegraph*, December 20, 1974 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[279] *Catholic Telegraph*, August 4, 1989 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.
[280] *Catholic Telegraph*, January 26, 1979 here quoted from Community Chest Scrapbooks, n.d., Mss 783, Box 1, Volume 3, Cincinnati Museum Center.

Conclusion

When I set out to complete this project, I wanted to bridge the gap between the two very different manifestations of care afforded to dependent children in the 20th century, from the predominantly private orphanages to the predominantly public foster care system. I wanted to use the case of Cincinnati to ask what happened to orphanages and how the United States instead created a decentralized child welfare system reliant on foster placement in private boarding homes.

What followed was months spent researching archival materials and reviewing scholarship from the authoritative voices on child welfare history. This project analyzed how transformations in child welfare services took place in Cincinnati through the heart of the 20th century, the conditions that led to the abandonment of orphanages, and how foster care developed as a replacement to older systems of care. What I found in the course of my work was that oftentimes, even when reformers at Cincinnati's child social agencies were pressing for change, incremental reforms that occurred were the result of necessity not an altruistic desire to care for the needs of dependent children. Public forays into child welfare in Cincinnati were compulsory responses to crises such as: The Great Depression in the 1930s, increases in divorce and family violence in the 1960s, and skyrocketing juvenile delinquency in the 1970s. The lack of intentional reform on the part of city leaders resulted in haphazard reforms that were felt unevenly across Cincinnati's diverse racial and socioeconomic hierarchies. Those who were frequently at a disadvantage were racial minorities and those who were poor and did not share equal access to welfare services.

The greater obligation felt by city leaders to care for dependent children over the years of my research is best characterized as a consequence of pressures created by widespread economic

hardship, dramatic reorientation of gender roles, and transformations to the public's perception of the American family. Though it might have dampened progress, the at times confused leadership by Cincinnati and Hamilton County politicians with regard to child welfare did not put a stop to child welfare reform, especially at Cincinnati's child social agencies and institutions who continued to adapt their missions to offer expanded foster care services and professionalize the social work performed in the city.

The child welfare system that emerged in Cincinnati has a number of characteristics that differentiate it from others across the country. The city maintained and relied on an overwhelmingly private network of agencies to administer child welfare services longer than other American cities. Consequently, Cincinnati relied on institutions such as orphanages to care for dependent children into the 1970s when other states and cities in the country had long-ago phased out their use. This finding seems to be at odds with Cincinnati's strong tradition of being a pioneering city in the field of child welfare. Cincinnati was both host to the foundation of the first orphanage west of the Alleghenies in 1829 and was recognized a century later by CC Carstens of the CWLA for its initial success in implementing foster care. The dissonance between leading and then lagging behind in providing access to modern child welfare services can be explained by the Ohio model of child welfare that developed in the 19th century. The fact that Hamilton County commissioners were never required to establish public orphanages meant that Cincinnati would enter the 20th century without a legacy of government involvement in the care of dependent children.

The lack of locally funded public intervention, at least initially, in the process of caring for dependent children made the desired reforms following the 1909 White House Conference difficult to achieve in Cincinnati. The private institutions that existed were often limited by their

own budgets, facilities, and staff and could not always provide their children with the care that they felt was appropriate. This did not, however, dim their hope or lessen their resolve to provide dependent children with the best care within their power. The story of child welfare in Cincinnati is a mixed bag vacillating between a dramatically changing society and child social agencies trying to keep pace in order to protect the city's most vulnerable. The uniqueness of the findings in this case study suggests that broad assumptions about the universality of the foster care movement in the United States are not useful to a complete understanding of child welfare with its manifold nuances and complexities. The distinctness of this case study is what gives it value and makes it relevant.

Historical research on child welfare is often posited by necessity on the assumption of generalizable national trends in the emergence of foster care. What is often missing is a discussion of potential regional variation, clashing perspectives, and views of foster care as something other than a monolithic movement. Scholars acknowledge that foster care has never been a national system and that the development and implementation of private boarding homes and family placements were subject to considerable adaptation state by state— locality by locality.[281] While admissions of variety among iterations of foster care nationally do not warrant outright dismissal of existing research, they do suggest the need for further historical research. Because foster care evolved to its current form state by state, and in Ohio, county by county, the administration and character of foster care should be analyzed as something closely aligned with the character and community of a specific locality. The point of this project was to provide a more accurate portrayal of Cincinnati's history with regards to foster care and to emphasize the

[281] Rymph, 4.

room for regional variation in foster care history more broadly. This project is meant to safeguard against generalizations that can be dangerous to larger narratives.

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